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THE BIBLE READERS' LIFE OF CHRIST

The Bible Readers' Life of Christ

An Interpretative Account of the Words and Works of Jesus Based Upon the Gospel Harmony

By
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To my wife, whose intelligent sympathy has been a constant inspiration in the sacred ministry of life.

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PREFACE

THE purpose of the author in this volume is to give a brief but interpretative and descriptive account of the words and works of Jesus, based upon the harmony of the Gospels. It is his hope that this presentation of the "supreme life" will prove helpful to all who desire a clear and vital view of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

The book is the result of a lifelong interest in the Gospel records, which are accepted at face value as the divine portrayal of the character and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps preachers, laymen and women, young people and adults, may find in this modest volume fresh inspiration to love, appreciate and follow him who is "the way, the truth and the life."

It is hoped that the arrangement and development of the topics and events will make this treatise suitable as a textbook, not only for schools but also for assemblies and conferences, and for Bible classes in churches, Sunday schools, missionary and young people's societies, as well as for private groups of earnest souls who wish to study together the matchless life of Jesus Christ.

The author is greatly indebted to Robertson's *Har-*

mony of the Gospels, which is rather closely followed in its chronology. He is also grateful to Dr. J. E. Gwatkin and Dr. E. F. Haight, both professors in the Baptist Bible Institute at New Orleans, for their sympathetic interest and fraternal helpfulness.

The chronological confusion apparent when we say that Jesus was born about 4 B. C. is due to an uncorrected error made by Abbot Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century of our era.

This fruit of love and labour is sent on its way with the earnest prayer that it may make some contribution to the proper appreciation of Jesus as the Son of man, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

B. H. DEMENT.

New Orleans, Louisiana.

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INTRODUCTION

It is important to connect historically the Old Testament and New Testament periods. The stream of history flows without interruption. The Inter-Biblical period is not like a lost river. God may be silent, but he is never inactive. The Inter-Biblical period includes the time intervening between the close of the Old Testament history and the beginning of the New Testament period—or about 400 years. During this time no prophet appeared, but God's hand controlled all the nations and especially guided his own people.

I. *This period may be divided into four historic epochs determined by the nation dominating the Jewish people.*

1. Persian rule—536 to 331 B. C. During this period the Jews were given religious liberty and proved loyal to their rulers, increasing in numbers, wealth and influence.

2. Greek rule—331 to 167 B. C. The brief and brilliant career of Alexander the Great—331 to 323 B. C.—achieved great results for the Jews and the entire world. Some of the more significant results of Alexander's work may be noted as follows: first, he carried the Greek language and culture over nearly all the civilized world; second, he established scores of cities in all the countries he conquered; third, he sought to merge the best there was in Grecian and Oriental

civilizations by uniting Persians and Greeks on terms of equality; fourth, he granted religious liberty to the various nationalities in his empire; fifth, he aroused the slumbering energies of the world and became the agent of an advanced civilization characterized by a sense of human brotherhood, high ideals and practical achievements.

After the death of Alexander the Great the Jews were controlled by the Ptolemies in Egypt, 323 to 198 B. C. For the longer part of this period the Jews were generously treated, and under Ptolemy Philadelphus, or Ptolemy II, a famous library was established at Alexandria, and the Old Testament, written in Hebrew, was translated into Greek—the Septuagint—about 275 B. C. He made many gifts to the temple and treated the Jews with great generosity. Jerusalem suffered severely at the hands of some of the subsequent rulers and therefore gladly welcomed Antiochus the Great after the battle of Panium, 198 B. C., and thus came under the rule of the Syrian Kings.

Varied were the fortunes of the Jews under the Seleucid or Syrian Kings, from 198 B. C. to 167 B. C. A justified rebellion of the Jews was occasioned by the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes (The Illustrious) to enforce uniform religion, and thus hellenize or heathenize the Jews, and to require all men to worship the gods of the King of Syria.

3. The Maccabean period—167 to 63 B. C. This period of comparative Jewish independence was due to successful reaction against the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. Mattathias and his noble sons are

held in everlasting honour by the Jews and all lovers of liberty. He was a priest at Modin, between Jerusalem and Joppa, and when commanded by the royal commissioner to sacrifice on an idolatrous altar, vigorously refused and declared his loyalty to the Jewish religion, slew the commissioner and his retinue, tore down the altar, unfurled the national banner and fled to the mountains, where he was joined by many of his faithful countrymen.

He was succeeded by his third son, Judas Maccabæus (the Hammerer), who promptly and vigorously unfurled the banner of the Maccabees. He was succeeded by his brother, Jonathan, who was followed by another brother, Simon Maccabæus.

During the reign of the Maccabees much of the old time splendour and independence of the Jews was enjoyed, but during the latter part of the period inferior and wicked rulers marred the national glory.

4. The Roman rule—63 B. C. to 70 A. D. Through the conquest of Julius Cæsar the Jews came under Roman rule. Antipater, an Idumean, who aided Cæsar in Egypt, was appointed procurator of Judea by the emperor. Naturally Antipater appointed his son, Herod, subsequently known as Herod the Great, as Governor of Judea, thus limiting even the local affairs of the Jews to the control of the hated foreigner. This resulted in a crushing blow to Jewish liberty.

Herod the Great was born B. C. 74 and died B. C. 4. After being appointed by his father, Antipater, as Governor of Judea, he did valiant service in putting down robber bands which infested the country. He was

appointed King 44 B. C. and won his crown 41 B. C. He built Cæsarea and other cities and many theatres, some even in Jerusalem. He reconstructed the temple at Jerusalem, making it the most magnificent in the world. This temple, though begun in 19 B. C., was not fully completed until 65 A. D., five years before its destruction by the Romans. Herod showed marked ability in statesmanship, and cruelty in home and state. He had Mariamne, his Jewish wife whom he had married for political reasons as well as love, put to death; also their two sons, through jealousy and rivalry. He irritated the Jews by putting a golden eagle over the principal gate of the temple. He had the babes of Bethlehem slain, out of jealousy at the birth of Jesus, and just before he died had his favourite son, Antipater, put to death. After changing his will twice he died in great agony at Jericho, 4 B. C.

He is known in history as "able, cruel, jealous and fickle." He could win the favour of great men but never learned to conquer himself. He hated the Jews with a fiendish animosity, and his memory is dishonoured throughout the world.

According to Herod's last will, which was approved at Rome, Palestine was divided among his three sons. First, Archelaus, king or tetrarch of Judea, Samaria and Idumea. Second, Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He lived in open sin with Herodias. Third, Herod Philip, the best of his sons, tetrarch of Iturea, etc., east of Galilee.

When Archelaus was deposed by Augustus in A. D. 6, the sceptre departed from Judah and the kingdom of

David sank into a Roman province and was ruled by a special procurator subject to the Governor of Syria. Pontius Pilate was the fifth man to hold this office—26 to 36 A. D.

II. *The universal preparation for the coming of Christ embraced at least the following elements:*

1. Universal empire—the Romans guaranteeing universal peace; universal law; universal intercourse through travel and commerce. 2. Universal language—the Greek—as the result of the conquests of Alexander the Great. 3. Universal hope. The Jewish faith, founded upon the Old Testament teaching, aroused general expectation of a coming deliverer through the dispersion of the Jews and their teaching.

III. We may briefly *contrast the historical situations* at the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament period. As to government, the Old Testament Jews were under Persian rule and enjoyed internal peace. In the New Testament period they were under Roman rule and experienced internal strife. As to religion, there was a threefold contrast:

First, as to place. At the close of the Old Testament, the temple only, and at the beginning of the New Testament, the temple and the synagogues scattered throughout the world. Second, as to practice. In the Old Testament period idolatry was prevalent; in the New Testament period monotheism prevailed. Third, as to parties. In the Old Testament period there was unity of religious organization; in the New Testament period there were many divisions into religious and

semi-religious sects—Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Herodians.

The chief ruling body of the Jews in the New Testament period was the Sanhedrin. Some have traced its origin to Moses (Deuteronomy 16:18, 19), but it had its organic development after the Babylonian captivity while the Jews were under Greek influence. It consisted of seventy elders and rulers with the high priest an ex-officio. It was composed mainly of two classes: first, the chief priests or heads of twenty-four courses or orders who were mostly Sadducees; second, scribes who represented the Pharisees. Other members were heads of families, and therefore called elders. There were three important qualifications for membership—the man must be good-looking, must have great learning and must be the father of a family.

IV. Let us *consider briefly the two leading religious parties in the time of Christ*—the Pharisees and the Sadducees:

(1) *The Pharisees.* They were called the "Separatists," because they separated themselves from the masses.

a. *Their creed.* The *standard* of their creed was the Old Testament plus traditions. The *articles* of their belief were divine sovereignty and human free agency, belief in the future life, the resurrection of the dead, angels and spirits. Their written traditions were called the "Mishna," or "Second Law." These written traditions were explained by commentaries called the "Gemara," of which there were two, the Jerusalem and the Babylonian. The Talmud was the Mishna together

with either one of these commentaries—the Jerusalem or Babylonian Gemara.

b. *Their conduct.* The Pharisees practiced the best morals of the day, but they were very exacting in the externals of religion, neglecting the weightier matters of life. They were proud and austere.

c. *Their power.* They numbered only about 6,000, but were well distributed and mighty in politics and religion. They were the popular party with both men and women. They were great proselyters.

d. *Their schools.* As to place, synagogues and temple. As to doctrine, there was the liberal school under Hillel and the conservative school under Shammai. Paul was educated in the latter school.

(2) *The Sadducees,* known as "The Righteous." They were disciples of Sadoc, 291–260 B. C.

a. *Their creed.* Its standard, the Pentateuch. Tradition was rejected. Its articles of faith—the Sadducees magnified the human will, denied Providence, the resurrection of the dead, the future life, angels and spirits (Matt. 22:23; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8).

b. *Their conduct.* They regarded the law as a heavy yoke. They aimed to live right because it is right. Their principle was, "Have a good time while you may." "Eat, drink, and be merry."

c. *Their power.* They were not numerous, but respectable, aristocratic, and influential in religion, and especially in politics.

V. *Records of the Life of Christ.*

The principal sources from which we are to learn the character and work of Jesus are the four Gospels—

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first three Gospels are remarkably similar in their treatment of material, and are therefore called the Synoptic Gospels. John, who wrote some years after the other evangelists, is supplementary and unique in his selection and treatment of events.

1. Matthew.

The author, known also as Levi, the son of Alpheus, was a publican, or tax collector, at Capernaum. He immediately heeded Christ's personal appeal, made a feast in his honour and became one of the twelve apostles and the author of the book that bears his name.

Matthew wrote primarily for the Jews to convince them that Christ was the long-promised Old Testament Messiah. He lays special emphasis upon Jesus as King, therefore traces his genealogy back through David, the King, to Abraham, the father of the faithful. He quotes frequently from the Old Testament and notes the fulfilment of prophecy as it relates to events in Christ's life. This method is effective in proving that Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people, but he teaches that the Gentiles are also included in the work of the Messiah. He records the facts that the Magi came from afar and laid their gifts at Jesus' feet, and that Jesus authorized his followers to go into all the world and make obedient disciples of all the nations.

The "kingdom of heaven" is prominent in his teaching. He makes extensive use of the topical method shown in the two great groups of parables in chapter thirteen and chapters twenty-four and twenty-

five, and a significant group of miracles in chapters eight and nine.

Matthew was a logician as well as a historian. His writings therefore appeal strongly to the mature mind, though his combination of the words and works of Jesus presents a piece of fine literary workmanship.

2. Mark.

Mark was a nephew of Barnabas, the great pastor at Antioch, and one of the first foreign missionaries. He accompanied his uncle, and the Apostle Paul, during a part of their first missionary journey. Though he abandoned them at Perga in Asia Minor, he subsequently developed in strength and courage and regained the confidence of Paul and secured from Peter the affectionate appellation, " my son " (I Peter 5:13).

His Gospel is generally recognized as the earliest of the biographies of Jesus, the probable order of production being Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. He received his material from Peter, whose fiery spirit often flashes out in the vivid narratives found in the briefest but most graphic, concrete and animated of the Gospel records.

His language is simple and picturesque, the movement lively; thus making this Gospel the favourite of children and the delight of all. The rapid action is expressed by the use of " immediately," " forthwith," etc. The portrayal of the looks and gestures of Jesus, and the emotional effect he produced on his hearers, are among the striking features of Mark's Gospel.

He deals sparingly with the words of Jesus, but lays great emphasis upon his works which prove him to be

the Son of God as well as the Son of man. His method of treatment made a strong appeal to the vigorous and practical Romans whom the evangelist had especially in mind. In his pen picture he presents Jesus as the divine Worker and Messianic King.

3. Luke.

Luke was probably from Antioch in Syria. He was a co-labourer with Paul, who calls him "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14). He was with Paul from Troas to Philippi during the second missionary journey, and several years later accompanied him to Jerusalem (Acts 20:5; 21:18). He may have written his Gospel in Cæsarea while Paul was in prison awaiting his trial, which issued in his being sent to Rome without accusation but simply because he appealed to Cæsar in order to escape the persecution and injustice of the Jews at Jerusalem. He was the only person with the great apostle during the latter's second Roman imprisonment.

As an author, Luke was a historian of the first rank, who gathered material with care, sifted it with discrimination and combined it with skill. He was a man of culture and scholarly habits. He was an author of literary finish as well as one of historical accuracy.

He alone gives an account of the events immediately connected with the birth of John the Baptist and furnishes more details than the other evangelists concerning the infancy of Jesus. We are indebted to him for the account of the Perean ministry (chapters 9–19), in which Christ uttered a series of priceless parables (chapters 15–16) not recorded elsewhere. He blots out all lines of racial distinction and has a

good word for even the Samaritans. The grateful leper was a Samaritan, and the only one of the ten who were cleansed that showed appreciation of his blessing, and the parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most familiar and effective of Christ's discourses. Luke reveals the heart of a devout physician. He lays special emphasis upon prayer, childhood, womanhood, and the humanitarian aspects of Christ's ministry.

4. John.

John was a son of Zebedee and Salome and a brother of James, the elder. Both brothers belonged to the apostolic group. Owing to their fiery and impulsive nature, they were called Boanerges, the sons of thunder. John, however, became so subdued and transformed by grace and association with Jesus that he is known as "the beloved disciple." He was the author of five books—The Gospel According to John, First, Second and Third Epistles of John, and Revelation. He died as an exile on the Isle of Patmos at a ripe old age, about 100 A. D. His Gospel is unique in its selection and treatment of material. It begins with the pre-existence of Christ and is written for the avowed purpose of creating faith in Jesus as the Son of God (20:31).

The style is simple and clear, the matter theological and spiritual. The method is that of extended discourses, often grouped about a miracle. Dialogue and animated discussions are prominent. It is the most controversial and yet the most spiritual and philosophical of all the Gospel records.

John had leaned so much on the Saviour's breast, and imbibed the divine spirit so thoroughly, that it is often difficult to distinguish between his words and the words of Jesus.

He deals extensively in vivid contrasts—sin and righteousness, darkness and light, truth and falsehood, ignorance and knowledge, faith and unbelief, bondage and liberty, life and death. He alone gives us an account of the early or Judean ministry; the work in Samaria (chapter 4); the rise of Pharisaic opposition (chapter 5 f.); the final discourses of Jesus (chapters 13–17), in which Christ reveals himself to his own disciples and utters his memorable intercessory prayer (chapter 17).

The Christ of John's Gospel makes a distinct and indelible impression upon the candid and careful reader.

Each evangelist draws his own portrait of Jesus, selecting and using the material best suited to his purpose. No one attempts a complete biography, nor do all four evangelists give more than a few of the striking events, sayings and miracles of Jesus, who "crowded into three brief years words and deeds that might have adorned a century."

Matthew represents Christ as the king; Mark presents him as the worker; Luke portrays him as the philanthropist; John pictures him as the redeemer. Matthew is Jewish and Messianic; Mark, Roman and practical; Luke, humanitarian and universal; John, spiritual and philosophical. Yet, embodied in all four records, like nerves in human flesh, is Jesus, our Saviour and our Lord.

CHAPTER I

THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION—JESUS GETTING READY FOR HIS WORK

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   2. John's Introduction, John 1:1-18
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II. Events Immediately Preceding the Birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus
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CHAPTER I

THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION—CHRIST GETTING READY FOR HIS WORK

THERE is a universal and perennial charm about Jesus of Nazareth. His character and mission challenge the thought, the admiration and the adoration of all men. No people are too low to respond to his saving power; no nation so exalted as to transcend the need of his redemption. His personality stands pre-eminent among the great of earth because he is the Son of man; his rank is above the angels of heaven because he is the Son of God. The redeemed love and obey him in the shadows of earth, and adore and serve him amid the splendours of heaven.

If we would profit by a study of the life of Christ, we must have a mind eager to receive the truth, a heart hungry for divine fellowship and a will ready to yield to his authority.

I. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE LIFE OF CHRIST

In bringing together the fourfold record of the life of Christ, we find an interesting variety in the introductory portions of the Gospel.

Matthew is genealogical and writes to satisfy the Jewish expectation that Jesus Christ should be of the

lineage of David; Mark is topical and prefers simply to state his theme (1:1): "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;" Luke is historical and aims to gratify the taste of Greek historians by dedicating his thesis to an individual—Theophilus (Acts 1:1); John is theological and seeks to meet the theological demands of those interested in the life of Christ.

1. Luke's dedication, Luke 1:1-4.

When Luke wrote his Gospel he was confronted with many narratives of the life of Christ; doubtless many oral traditions also. He felt it important to have a trustworthy treatise embodying the main facts of Jesus as the Messiah—facts fully established by competent witnesses and obedient believers and ministers of the Word.

His method of research was that of a true historian. He went to the original sources for his material; examined all data with care; sifted the results with accurate discrimination, and arranged the events in the order best suited to establish and impress the recorded facts and to give a solid foundation of intelligent assurance concerning the truth of the traditions of early Christianity. He did not record cunningly devised fables but well authenticated events under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. John's introduction, John 1:1-18.

The Gospel of John begins with Christ before his birth in Bethlehem. It takes us back into remote eternity before creation itself. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word

was God" (1:1). We have in this section the Word or the express image of God, the Son of God, described as *pre-existent,* "In the beginning was the Word;" as *personal,* "The Word was with God," in intimate association; as *divine,* "The Word was *God,*" in all essentials of deity; as *creative,* "All things were made by him," and apart from him was not even one single thing made in all the universe; as *life-giving,* "In him was life, and the life was the light of men,"—intellectual, moral and spiritual light of all men in all nations throughout all time; as *redemptive,* "To as many as received him to them gave he the authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name who were born, not of blood (not children of God by heredity), nor of the will of the flesh (not children of God through development), nor of the will of man (not the children of God by reformation), but of God (through the regenerating power of his Spirit); as *incarnate,* "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us;" that is, the eternal Word, or Christ, became man and tabernacled or tented in human flesh during his earthly life; *as pre-eminent,* for "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And of his fulness we have received and grace for grace."

Though unique in presentation, John's introduction is in harmony with all we learn about Jesus, both in the synoptic Gospels and in the other books of the New Testament. Christ translates deity into terms of humanity because he is both the Son of man and the Son of God.

3. The two genealogies, Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38.

Both Matthew and Luke give a genealogical table of Christ, thus establishing his legal descent according to Old Testament prophecy and Jewish expectation.

Waiving all discussion of these two tables, we may express the opinion corroborated by many scholars that Matthew, writing especially for the Jews, gives the *legal* descent of Christ which came through Joseph, and Luke, having all nations in mind, presents the *real* descent of Christ which came through Mary.

Matthew traces the genealogy of Joseph through the head of the chosen people down to Christ, while Luke traces his lineage back through Mary to Adam, the head of the human race. Concerning the genealogical record in Matthew, we may note the following interesting facts:

First, Christ's descent was through both good and evil men who show ethical variety common in human genealogy.

Second, through four women, three disreputable (Tamar, Rahab and the wife of Uriah) and one heathen, Ruth the Moabitess.

Third, through selected ancestors, many being omitted but enough recorded to maintain the line of succession unbroken.

Fourth, through three periods of fourteen generations each, thus aiding the memory and vivifying the history of Israel; the first period being known as the theocracy, or the rule of God; the second as the monarchy, or the rule of kings; the third as the hierarchy, or the rule of priests.

Fifth, vitally through Mary, but not physically through Joseph. The word *begat* is uniformly used to indicate the successive stages of descent until we reach Joseph, then the phraseology is significantly altered. Instead of saying, as we would naturally expect (1:16), "And Jacob begat Joseph and Joseph begat Jesus," we have the illuminating statement, "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." This is in harmony with Luke's statement (3:23), "Jesus being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph." Christ was thus the real son of Mary, but only the reputed, not the physical son of Joseph. He was genetically the Son of God, for that which was conceived in Mary was not of Joseph, but of the Holy Ghost.

II. Events Immediately Preceding the Birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus

Three angelic annunciations and two spiritual songs constitute the striking events immediately preceding the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus.

1. The annunciation to Zacharias of the birth of John the Baptist, Luke 1:5-25.

John the Baptist was well born. His father was a devout priest, and his mother a helpmeet indeed. They were righteous before God and obedient to his will. They had lived to a good old age without any offspring, but in the midst of the shadow of this misfortune and reproach, the star of hope arose.

In the process of time the high privilege came by lot to Zacharias to offer incense at the morning and

evening sacrifices. The priesthood had been thoroughly organized after the Babylonian captivity and special functions were assigned by lot. Zacharias was gladly and faithfully discharging his duty when the angel, Gabriel, approached him and spoke the quieting words, "Fear not, Zacharias." That is, "Abandon your fear, for I am not come on a retributive but a merciful errand, and to announce an answer to your own long-continued prayer for a son." The angel told him that the promised child would cause joy in many hearts; his character would make him great in the sight of God; his habit of total abstinence from strong drink would ally him to the ancient worthies; his soul would be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb, and his mission would be to turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and thus prepare the way for the coming of the Messianic King.

For a moment Zacharias counsels with his fears and stumbles over the laws of nature. As a temporary rationalist he asks doubtfully, "Whereby shall I know this?" For lack of implicit faith he was immediately stricken with dumbness which remained a penal sign of unbelief until the angel's words were fulfilled and the promised child was born and named. The ministrations in the temple being fulfilled, the aged couple returned to their desert home, where in quietness and seclusion they awaited the unfolding of the divine plan.

2. The annunciation to the Virgin Mary of the birth of Jesus, Luke 1:26-38.

The scene changes from Jerusalem to Nazareth, the

home of Joseph and Mary, who were betrothed, or engaged, but not formally married.

The sudden salutation of the angel brought Mary much perplexity, which was allayed by the soothing words, "Fear not, Mary," followed by the promise of a son who should be called the Son of God and should occupy the throne of David forever.

Mary's question does not reveal her doubt but rather her perplexity as to the method of procedure. "How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?" The natural process of propagation was not in operation. "How, then," Mary asked as a matter of honest inquiry, "shall the child be brought into the world?" Her serious question for information is not censured but helpfully answered. "The overshadowing power of the Most High," and not the agency of Joseph, was the divine plan of her conception. She, therefore, brought forth him who is indeed the Son of God. The angel tells Mary of the good fortune of Elisabeth, her cousin, and gives assurance that the word of God cannot fail in any case. Mary accepts the situation in faith, and Gabriel immediately departs.

3. The annunciation to Joseph of the birth of Jesus, Matthew 1:18-25.

If Jesus was to be born according to the angel's promise to Mary, a delicate situation would naturally arise. She would hesitate to explain her condition to Joseph, and when her prospective motherhood became evident he was naturally perplexed as to the proper course to pursue, wishing to deal with Mary in mild justice and gentle rebuke, and to keep family and per-

sonal matters as much as possible from the public eye and the tongue of slander.

At the right moment the Lord came to him in a dream and gave a true, satisfactory explanation of Mary's condition; "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." This explanation is in harmony with the promise of Gabriel to Mary herself. The heart-healing "fear not" is spoken, the anticipated child named Jesus and the prophecy that God should dwell with man fulfilled.

Joseph's conduct in these peculiarly trying circumstances, and his faith in God and in Mary, showed him to be a man of genuine greatness not unworthy of being the husband of the mother of our Lord.

4. The songs of Elisabeth and Mary, Luke 1:39-56.

After the annunciation to Mary of the birth of Jesus, she hastened to visit her cousin, Elisabeth, whose home was in one of the cities in the wild country of Judea—probably near Hebron. Immediately upon Mary's salutation, Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and with a loud voice of joy pronounced a blessing upon her, and with grateful humility expressed appreciation of the honour of a visit from the mother of her Lord. Whereupon Mary responded in the words of the far-famed Magnificat (v. 46), "My soul doth magnify the Lord." Mary's song shows that she was saturated with Old Testament teaching and prophecy, a tribute both to her early training and to spiritual attainment, and an indication of her qualification to create a spiritual atmosphere in her Nazareth home. Two thoughts ring throughout the song, God's mercy

and his faithfulness. The note of triumphant praise sounds clear and strong because of God's mercy to her, her personal blessings and honour, and also because of his mercy shown from generation to generation upon all them that fear him. There was also an expression of fervent gratitude because of God's faithfulness and justice in scattering the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and in putting down unworthy princes from their thrones. She reaches the highest note of praise when she touches upon God's mercy in his promise to Israel and his faithfulness in keeping his covenant to Abraham and to his seed forever.

III. Events Directly Associated with the Birth and Early Life of John the Baptist, Luke 1:57-80

John the Baptist was born B. C. 7 or 6 in the hill country of Judea, where he lived until he entered upon his intensive and extensive evangelistic campaign as the forerunner of Christ. The neighbours and relatives were intensely interested in John as a child of promise and the unexpected offspring of Zacharias and Elisabeth. Truly many rejoiced at his birth. According to Jewish custom, he was circumcised and named on the eighth day, being thus officially enrolled as a member of the Jewish nation (Gen. 17 and Lev. 12:3).

His friends and relatives were anxious to call him Zacharias, in honour of his father, but his mother, whose privilege and joy it was to name her child, said that he should be called John. Friends interposed an objection and were disposed to argue the matter, but

when they saw that she was fixed in her opinion, they made signs to Zacharias and he promptly wrote the decisive sentense, " His name is John "—remembering the words of Gabriel in the temple. Immediately Zacharias' tongue was loosed and he broke the penal silence of months by praising God in rapturous song. The news scattered throughout the hill country, and the theme on every lip and in every heart was, " What, then, shall this child be? "

" And his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied, saying, ' Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people.' " Zacharias shows his familiarity with Old Testament scriptures, their words and doctrines, their origin, meaning, and their enlarged significance. He condenses the messages in the mouth of the holy prophets, which have been since the world began, into the hope of national salvation and personal forgiveness and righteousness based upon God's promise to Abraham and to his seed forever. In his apostrophe to the child, Zacharias calls him the prophet of the Most High, the messenger that prepares the way of the coming Messiah (Malachi 3:1), and the morning star that heralds the rise of the Sun of Righteousness and the dawn of the day of salvation.

Luke gives a graphic statement of the experience of John the Baptist from his birth until his public appearance as the harbinger of Christ (1:80), " And the child grew (physically and normally) and waxed strong in spirit (his mind and soul developed harmoniously with his body), and he was in the deserts until his showing

unto Israel." John lived in a sparsely settled community where he could study man without distraction and nature at first hand, and cultivate the habits of observation, meditation and prayer which gave point and power to his subsequent preaching. In the quiet of his rural home, in the sacred atmosphere of its instruction and devotion, he grew in the knowledge of God and man and developed those traits of character which made him one of God's greatest messengers of truth and righteousness.

IV. Events Directly Associated with the Birth and Early Life of Jesus

1. The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, Luke 2:1-7.

From the birth and early life of the prophet of the Most High, we move forward in God's unfolding purpose to the birth and early life of the Son of God.

The coming of Jesus into the world is the most meaningful birth in the annals of time. It changed the chronology of history and introduced upon the stage of existence the only perfect human being that ever blessed the world with his presence.

The great men of earth are either conscious or unconscious agents in fulfilling the eternal and universal purpose of God. Cæsar Augustus, or the Divine Emperor, as the title signifies, carried out his imperial plans without any idea of fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. But his decrees, without any knowledge or design on his part, had already been interwoven with the divine plan concerning the time, place and circumstances of the birth of Christ.

Cæsar Augustus desired to have accurate knowledge of his dominions, and a common rational method was to take a periodic census to ascertain the population of the different countries under the control of the Roman eagles. Luke gives us some items of illuminating history concerning the date and place of the Saviour's birth. Modern research has proved Luke to be thoroughly reliable in his statements here as elsewhere. Inscriptions found in Asia Minor agree with Luke and show that Quirinius was twice Governor of Syria, and that this enrollment occurred during his first term of office, B. C. 10 to 7. The tax reported in Acts 5:37 took place during his second term. Owing to errors in chronology, it is generally admitted that the true date of the birth of Jesus is B. C. 6 or 5. Allowing for some very probable delay in carrying out the census, we can readily see that it took place when Quirinius was first Governor of Syria.

Joseph, being of the house and family of David, went to Bethlehem for enrollment and took Mary, then in a delicate condition, with him. The village was crowded with people bent on the same errand. There being no room in the hotel, Joseph and Mary availed themselves of the humble accommodations in the barn where they kept their beasts of burden. Such experiences were common in Palestine in those days, and are not infrequent to-day. The family and animals often abide under the same roof. She, therefore, brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger as the humble but most convenient cradle for the

infant Saviour. No room was made for him in the inn, as citizens and visitors alike were ignorant of the significant event that was so silently and quietly taking place. Bethlehem, the house of bread, the City of David, becomes the focal point of universal history.

2. The message of the angels and the visit of the shepherds, Luke 2:8-20.

It is interesting to note the first persons to whom the news of the Saviour's birth was revealed. They were not the slumbering inhabitants of Bethlehem; not the weary visitors in the crowded village; not the technical Bible students in Jerusalem, but the faithful, open-minded, wide-awake shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night. To common people, busy with their ordinary tasks, God reveals the great fact of the Saviour's birth.

In the gloom of the quiet night the glory of the Lord shone upon the plains of Bethlehem and created great fear in the simple-hearted, reverent shepherds. Like the words to Zacharias in the temple, and to Mary in her Nazareth home, words of consolation are spoken, "Be not afraid." Then the message of salvation is delivered, "For behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:11). A sign of confirmation is given, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." The missionary angel having delivered his message, the angelic choir chant the praises of God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." According to this

heavenly anthem there will be universal peace only when men make God's will supreme and lead lives well pleasing in his sight. As long as the nations disobey God, they will be at war among themselves. True religion is the sole preventive of war and the only guarantee of world peace. Universal peace, the religious dream of the ages, will come when all men shall, like Enoch of old, walk with God and live as brothers. The will of God must be done on earth before peace can reign among all nations. The prevalence of Christianity or the personal presence of Christ can alone induce men to beat their swords into plow-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks and to learn and to practice war no more, and to sit instead each man under his own vine and fig tree in social harmony and quietness of spirit.

The angels return to heaven, and the shepherds verify their words by going immediately to Bethlehem and finding the babe wrapped in swaddling bands lying in a manger, while Mary and Joseph pour their hearts' undying love into that humble cradle. With joyful satisfaction they become the first human proclaimers of the Gospel they heard from angelic lips and created an expectant wonder in all who heard. With lives enriched by this heavenly experience, the shepherds resume their common tasks which they beautify with a spirit of joy and praise.

Amid these shifting scenes, and mingling of heaven and earth, Mary gathers all things and stores them in the treasure-house of her heart for silent, reverent, grateful meditation.

3. The circumcision of Jesus, Luke 2:21.

Jesus was made of a woman, made under the law, and therefore his parents would, as righteous Jews, observe in his behalf the Mosaic ritual. According to the covenant with Abraham the male children were to be circumcised and named on the eighth day, and thus be enrolled as members of the Jewish nation. The child of the Virgin Mary had already been named Jesus by the angel who appeared to Joseph with comforting assurance. The angel, in his message to Mary, calls the child the Son of God. She and Joseph gladly adopted the angelic designation and called her firstborn son Jesus. " The sweetest name on mortal tongue; the sweetest carol ever sung—Jesus, blessed Jesus."

4. The presentation of Jesus in the temple and the homage of Simeon and Anna, Luke 2:22-38.

Forty days passed, and the period of purification following the birth of a man child was fulfilled according to the Mosaic law (Lev. 12:1-8). Those financially able to afford a liberal offering were to bring a lamb for the burnt offering and a turtle dove or a young pigeon for a sin offering, but the poor might substitute a turtle dove or a young pigeon for the lamb. Hence, Joseph and Mary brought to the priest a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, for their offering, according to the law, showing their fidelity to God in the midst of their poverty.

The unusual is constantly occurring in the life of Christ. Jerusalem was the centre of Jewish worship and Messianic expectation. We find in the holy city two choice souls in whose rich soil the seed of Messianic hope had flowered into fruition—Simeon and

Anna. Simeon lived in the very atmosphere of the Holy Spirit who revealed to him the fact that he would live to see the long-looked-for Messiah, the world's Saviour. His very steps into the temple were guided by the Holy Spirit, who identified the infant Jesus as the Messiah. In paternal love he took Jesus into his arms and blessed God for what his eyes were seeing, even a light for the unveiling of the Gentile world and the supreme glory of the children of Israel. Such a prophecy of the mission of Jesus caused Joseph and Mary to marvel greatly. To Mary Simeon speaks words of deep, sad significance, for Jesus shall be the touch-stone of the people of Israel—the stepping-stone to salvation for some and the stumbling-block of destruction for others. He shall have both bitter enemies and loyal friends. In the midst of Mary's high and holy honour a sword shall pierce her soul, as she, in future years, shall see him despised and rejected of men and behold him hanging on the rugged tree with spear-pierced side and nail-pierced hands and feet.

The aged Anna, a widow eighty-four years old, made her home in the temple, which she loved above her highest joy. She filled the days and nights with her devotions, and by intuition born of the Spirit who controlled her life she recognized the infant Jesus as the one destined to fulfill the expectations of all who looked for the redemption of Jerusalem from the rule of Rome and the ruin of sin.

5. **The homage of the wise men from the east, Matthew 2:1-12.**

There was international peace and intense and uni-

versal longing for a brighter and holier day when Jesus came to earth. Far beyond dominant Jewish influence, the expectation of a spiritual deliverer had sprung up like a root out of dry ground. Jerusalem was not only the capital of the Jewish people, but the centre of the religious hope of the world.

A short time, perhaps only a few months, before Jesus was born, some Magi, whose names and number we know not, started from their home somewhere in the wide regions of the distant east and journeyed toward Jerusalem, being guided by a peculiar star which they interpreted as being the sign that the long-looked-for King of the Jews and the ultimate King of the Gentiles also would soon come into the world. The Magi, or wise men, were theological scientists and scientific theologians; students of the heavens, believers in providence and worshippers of God. They were willing to follow the dim light of their imperfect knowledge as it led the way to the fuller glory of a new day of divine revelation. And God always rewards earnest seekers after truth with larger instalments of knowledge.

The Magi reached Jerusalem, which they considered the centre of knowledge of all things pertaining to the Jews. Upon their arrival they asked the pointed question which reveals the object of their long and weary journey, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him." Never had a question been propounded in Jerusalem which created such deep interest in religious and political circles. Among the masses, eccle-

siastical leaders and civil rulers, it dropped like a lighted match on a dry prairie; soon all Jerusalem was aflame with excitement. Herod, the wicked king, holding his appointment from Rome, was keenly jealous of any prospective rival and was troubled because of the probability of losing his throne when the newborn king should come into power. The people were deeply grieved, because they feared the diabolical measures Herod might take to wreak summary vengeance upon the royal infant. Herod feared a rival; the people an outburst of his cruelties.

Herod appealed to the highest Jewish authorities for an answer to the Magi's question. He called together the chief priests and scribes of the people, or all the leading teachers of the Old Testament, that he might have the decision of the highest tribunal. He wanted the opinion of the supreme judges immediately. The answer was soon given. Bethlehem, though so small as scarcely worthy to be considered a town of Judah, would be highly honoured in becoming the birthplace of a prince who should be the true Shepherd of Israel. Thus was announced a principle often illustrated in history, persons make places great, not places, persons.

Bethlehem is an ancient city, always small but of tender associations. It is beautifully situated on a limestone ridge about six miles south of Jerusalem. There David was born, and near-by Ruth reaped in the wheatfields of Boaz, and over the fertile plains shone the heavenly light and echoed the angel's voice when the faithful shepherds were told of the Saviour's birth. But Bethlehem, " the house of bread," owes its

immortality chiefly to him who is indeed the Bread of Life.

Herod plays the consummate hypocrite. Under cover of piety he finds out from the Magi exactly when the star appeared. He wears a holy countenance to deceive the wise men and tells them to report the finding of the child immediately to him that he may come and worship him also. He wishes to render such homage as wolves pay to lambs—killing and devouring them.

As the wise men leave Jerusalem for Bethlehem the star reappears and they travel the last six miles of their memorable journey with inexpressible joy. To the special star which guided from the far east to Jerusalem there was added the light of the Old Testament, and both star and scripture direct them from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. The chief priests and scribes, like guide-books, not guides, pointed the way to Bethlehem, yet moved not one step to the birthplace of the divine babe, but the Gentile Magi sought and found.

The Magi, upon their arrival in Bethlehem, find that the manger has been abandoned and a home has been found for Mary and the babe. With a deeper devotion than is usual when homage is paid earthly monarchs, the Magi lay their choicest gifts at the feet of the infant King of kings—gold, frankincense and myrrh. Even while in his mother's arms Jesus is beginning to draw the world unto himself.

God is watching Herod and protecting the Magi and Jesus. He warns the wise men in a dream not to

report to Herod, so they return to their own country another way.

6. The infant Jesus carried to Egypt and the children of Bethlehem slain, Matthew 2:13-18.

At this juncture the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and gave directions and reasons for a speedy flight into Egypt to escape the wiles and wrath of Herod. Joseph, with prompt obedience, took Mary and the child into Egypt and remained there in safety until the death of the king. When they came out of Egypt we have a wider personal fulfilment of the ancient scripture which referred to Israel as a nation, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Hosea 11:1). God exercised a special delivering providence over Israel as his son and over Jesus as his well-beloved Son, the Redeemer of Israel and the world.

Herod was not aware of the movements of Joseph, but he soon learned that the Magi had disobeyed his command and were journeying toward their eastern home. His wrath broke all bounds, for he could not silently endure opposition. He issued a heartless decree, one of many that made his reign a pandemonium. He ordered that all children under two years of age in Bethlehem and the surrounding country should be slain, hoping thereby to dispose of the newborn King, a future rival, with one murderous stroke. The sword fell upon perhaps a score of innocent babes and brought grief into many homes, but the object of his rage and jealousy had been safely removed to another country. The King of Heaven is more than a match for the king of Judea.

A striking national event in the history of Israel reminds the evangelist of the murder of the innocents. When Nebuchadnezzar ordered the people to be carried captive, he commanded them to be assembled at Ramah in the tribe of Benjamin. This event seems to be the fatal stroke at national existence; so, Rachel, the mother of the tribe of Benjamin, is represented as arising from the dead and weeping at the destruction of her people. A similar despairing situation is created when Jesus, the hope of Israel, is included in the murderous scheme of Herod. But in both cases God overruled and made the wrath of man to praise him, for Israel returned from captivity and his beloved Son came out of Egypt to be the Saviour of the world.

7. The child Jesus brought out of Egypt to Nazareth after the death of Herod, Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:39.

The sojourn in Egypt was brief. Herod's death was the signal for return. The king was commonly called Herod the Great. He was indeed great in architectural plans, great in their execution, great in power over men, but also great in cruelty and crime. The end of a wicked career is closing in horror for the king himself, but with a sigh of relief for the people who are in constant dread of his inexpressible cruelties.

In 44 B. C. Herod was named king of Judea by the Roman Senate. In three years he won his crown (41 B. C.) and reigned for forty years, dying in 4 B. C. at the age of seventy. He was of foreign descent, his father being Antipater of Idumæa. It was crushing to

the pride of the Jews to be controlled by Rome with their own people as sub-rulers, but even more bitter were the hardships they had to endure when oppressed by twofold foreign domination—Cæsar in Rome and Herod in Palestine.

Herod was a courageous warrior, a great builder of cities, an admirer of Greek culture and a lover of power and praise. He had few good qualities and many bad ones. The former were sparingly cultivated; the latter were developed to the fullest extent of jealousy, selfishness, sensuality and crime.

He had all members of the Sanhedrin put to death except two, and in wicked rage had many relatives murdered, including Mariamne, his Jewish wife, whom he by turns loved and hated with passionate fondness and jealous fury.

When Herod died, the angel of the Lord again appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, giving him this item of information and telling him to return to the land of Israel. He was in great perplexity, however, when he heard that Herod's wicked son, Archelaus, had succeeded to the Judean throne. Just at the right moment God came to his assistance and in a dream he was warned of the new king, and providentially guided to Nazareth in Galilee, where the family made their home until Jesus entered upon his public ministry.

Even in locating in Nazareth, Old Testament teaching and history, which are saturated with Messianic ideas, are fulfilled. Jesus is a *branch* (same root meaning as Nazareth) of the stock of Jesse, and is therefore appropriately called a Nazarene. A branch which

as a root out of dry ground shall flourish in the despised city of Galilee, an appropriate home for the humble and rejected Servant of Jehovah (Isa. 53).

8. Jesus at Nazareth during the thirty silent years.

In a religious home at Nazareth the child Jesus grew normally, waxed strong naturally and was filled with wisdom constantly. In infinite wisdom the grace of God was upon him as the infant, yet ever beloved Son of the Most High. Perfect development, according to God's physical, mental and spiritual laws, marked the unfolding life of him who is both the Son of God and the Son of man. No dwarfing sin nor weird miracle characterized the growing life of Jesus of Nazareth.

The first thirty years of Christ's life are marked by a wonderful seclusion and reticence. Only once is the curtain lifted from the family circle to give us a glimpse into the quiet home where Jesus spent nine-tenths of his earthly life. The silence of God but stirs the imagination of men to fill up a divinely ordained blank. A daily memorandum of the words and acts of the child Jesus would be an historic curio for a modern child psychologist. The apocryphal Gospels contain the work of fancy which manufactures and weaves into a preposterous fabric the imaginary sayings and doings of Jesus in his childhood days. They give a caricature, not a life portrait, of the boy Jesus.

There is no real blank, however, in the life of Christ. His infancy is vitally related to his visit to Jerusalem when twelve years of age, and that memorable experience is closely connected with all the succeeding years.

Jesus was brought up in a religious home of the middle class. There he had all the training that intelligent, pious, Jewish parents could give their children. His foster father, Joseph, was considerate and just; his mother, thoughtful and spiritual. She was a woman of rare talent, religious zeal, poetical fervour and spiritual emotions. She had a watchful eye, thoughtful mind and affectionate soul.

Jesus was doubtless trained with religious care. At the age of five or six he was taught the *Shema,* or Jewish creed (Deut. 6:4-5), " Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." He doubtless heard a prayer before and after each meal and the reading of the scripture as a daily religious exercise. At the age of six the Jewish child was sent to the synagogue school, where selections of the Old Testament were memorized and studied. It was expected that all faithful Jews should recite each morning and night certain verses from Deuteronomy (6:4-9; 11:13-21) and other selections as a vital confession of their religious faith. On each Sabbath a selection from the law and the prophets was read and expounded, so that during the year practically all of the Old Testament was publicly read.

The town Nazareth, in which Jesus was brought up, presented admirable opportunities for the study of human nature. Near the picturesque village ran one of the international highways from the East to Egypt. Jesus could study human nature intensively in a small

town where goodly fellowship prevails, and get a glimpse at various nations as the great caravans would pass by for commercial or religious purposes. From the hill, rising five hundred feet above the town, Jesus could behold within the circle of his vision a country teeming with sacred, historic associations—Mount Hermon toward the northeast, the Mediterranean toward the west, the plain of Esdraelon toward the south, the hills of Samaria, Mount Gilboa and Mount Ebal, toward the southeast, and eastward Mount Tabor and the highlands of Gilead. Doubtless Jesus ofttimes resorted to the top of the hill north of the city and studied the history of his people with the wonderful panorama spread out before him.

Joseph was a working man; he was called *the* carpenter, because he evidently was the leading man of his calling in the town. As a carpenter, he performed a greater variety of labour than is suggested by that name to-day. He combined the offices of architect, contractor and carpenter. His work consisted of building, rebuilding and upbuilding; and included houses, domestic furniture and agricultural implements. According to Jewish custom, Jesus was brought up to follow the calling of his father, hence he was called the son of the carpenter. Later on, perhaps after Joseph's death, he is called *the carpenter*. During all the silent years of his growing life he pursued his calling with loyalty to God and with faithfulness to his task. He had an excellent opportunity for studying, at various angles, the different types and conditions of men. Thus, with the book of God's word, the book of God's

works and the book of human life, Christ could gather material to weave into the closely knit fabric of his perfect knowledge and character.

Doubtless Jesus became perfectly familiar with three languages at least—Hebrew, the language of religion; Greek, the language of culture; Aramaic, the language of common intercourse. Christ showed his familiarity with the Old Testament scriptures by quoting from all sections of the Old Testament—the history, prophets and Psalms. He had read and pondered and lived the word of God.

Jesus was influenced by his environment, as all men are, but he was not made by his environment; no man is. The greater the personality the less is it moulded by circumstances. Jesus was far from being the product of his age. He was a unique personality introduced into his age to transform it and succeeding generations by his redemptive work.

The parents of Jesus set a worthy example of regularity in religious observances. They kept the annual feasts of the Jews, especially the Passover so dear to the nation's heart as symbolizing divine deliverance from Egypt's bondage. The normal Jewish child longed with a burning desire for the time to come when he could go to Jerusalem and see and hear those wonderful things so precious to his beloved people. When Jesus was twelve years of age he accompanied his parents to the feast of the Passover, an experience most impressive and memorable. The sacred week passed all too quickly, and the Nazareth group of relatives and friends began their homeward journey, seem-

ingly without making definite arrangements for the assembling of the entire party. The company continued a day's journey, and at nightfall the parents sought Jesus, but found him not. With anxious hearts they promptly returned to Jerusalem in search of their lost boy. After three days, or the day after they reached the city, they found him in the dearest place on earth to a devout Jew—the temple. They found him an earnest student of the scriptures, sitting in the midst of the teachers of the law, listening attentively to their expositions and applications, and out of the eagerness of his soul asking them questions so vital to his earnest heart. His grasp of the teaching of the Rabbis, and his knowledge revealed in the answers he gave to their questions, and the wisdom he showed in the inquiries he made stirred to the depths all who heard him and saw him. The Jerusalem teachers had heard many a bright Jewish youth, but none like Jesus. He even then gave indications of that time when the officers reported, "Never man spake like this man." There was a gentle rebuke in the question asked by his mother, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." There is in his reply a delicate suggestion that they are lacking in true discernment of his spirit and character —"How is it that ye *sought* me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house? Did ye not understand me well enough to know where to find me? My Father's house is the only place where I can feel at home. Why did you seek me? Why did you not come directly to the temple—my Father's house?"

There was spiritual affinity between Jesus and the temple, hence the parents' sorrow at the temporary loss of their boy, though painful, was altogether needless. His parents understood not the depths and heights of his reply, nor do we. Just as at the early age of twelve the influences of manhood begin to stir the deep of a boy's soul, so Jesus had, even now, the mighty swellings of Messianic consciousness. Though he realizes that in an unique sense God is his father, yet in the home in Nazareth he is subject to his parents according to the divine law of nature and sacred scriptures.

During the long period of eighteen years, extending from his childhood visit to Jerusalem to his appearance at the Jordan to be baptized of John, he led a life progressive and sinless in its development, silent, uneventful, unreported, but potent, significant, divinely guided and heaven blessed. Never was there more meaning expressed in a few words than we find in Luke 2:52, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." The Greek word for advanced is a pioneer term which signifies to cut one's way forward continuously as through an opposing forest crowded with undergrowth. We have here a pen picture of the unfolding and conquering life of Jesus, who always did those things well pleasing unto God. In this passage there is vividly sketched, first—mental progress, Jesus advanced in wisdom; second—physical progress, Jesus advanced in stature; third—spiritual progress, Jesus advanced in favour with God; fourth—social progress, Jesus advanced in favour with man.

During Christ's annual visits to Jerusalem, up to the time of his public ministry, he had an excellent opportunity to study the nation at its centre. He could see for himself the hollow profession of the leaders of religion and interpreters of the word of life. That he could restrain himself so many years is an evidence of his patience, infinite and divine.

V. Observations

1. Evidences of the supernatural.

The very air quivers with the supernatural as Jesus comes to earth. The star which guided the Magi; angelic appearances; the annunciation by Gabriel to Zacharias of the birth of John the Baptist; the annunciations of the birth of Jesus to Mary, to Joseph and to the shepherds; the anthem of praise by the angelic choir; the Magi warned in a dream not to return to Herod; Joseph directed by an angel into the land of Egypt and told to depart from Egypt, and warned in a dream against Archaleus, Herod's wicked son and successor; the birth of John the Baptist when his parents are advanced in years, and, above all, the birth of Jesus, who was begotten not by an earthly father but by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary according to God's promise.

2. Types of human nature.

In connection with the birth of Christ, we have illustrated several distinctive types of human nature: the sacred seeking of the Magi, who came from afar, sought and found and worshipped the infant King; the cold culture of the chief priests and scribes, who

told where Jesus was born but took no pains to give him homage; the cruel cunning of Herod, who feigned friendship for the new-born King while plotting his heartless murder; the icy indifference of the citizens and sojourners of Bethlehem, who had no room for Joseph and Mary in home or inn; the wakeful watching of the shepherds, who, while faithful to their flock, saw the glory of God and heard the angels in sermon and song; the faithful following of Joseph, who heard the voice of God and obeyed without delay and with a willing soul; the worshipful waiting of Simeon and Anna, who, while in the temple of the Lord, saw the infant Lord of the temple and were satisfied.

3. The hand of providence.

Christ was born in the fulness of time. The hand of providence is seen in all events that crowd the pages of his life and current history. Greek culture and philosophy failed to bring spiritual deliverance; Roman law and power had not redeemed the nations from sin; Jewish revelation and tradition had not satisfied the profound and age-long cry of the soul. In the midst of universal failure and universal expectation, Jesus came into the world according to the divine plan and promise.

The hand of God was upon the emperor at Rome, who unintentionally yet effectively created the conditions for Christ's designed and providential entrance into the world, so the time and place of his birth were according to the divine plan. The geography and almanac of Christ's life have a heavenly origin. The Lord appeared at the right time and place to all the

significant characters connected with the birth of Christ—to Zacharias, to Mary, to Joseph and to the Magi. The divine hand is seen and felt whenever and wherever it was needed to carry out the purpose of God—sometimes in gentle restraint, sometimes in penal infliction, sometimes in mighty urgings.

4. Spiritual songs.

Christianity is a religion of song. Earth and heaven made music when Jesus was born. The salvation he brought has, through the ages, inspired the sweetest melodies ever heard by human ears or felt by human hearts. Though there is music in the annunciation of the angel to Zacharias, to Mary and to Joseph, yet we find a sweeter symphony in the Magnificat of Mary, in the Benedictus of Zacharias, in the Nunc Dimittis of Simeon and in the Gloria in Excelsis of the angels. The music, begun when Jesus came to earth, will continue in spiritual power until the ransomed of the Lord shall sing the song of redemption in the temple of God, where the Lamb sitteth upon the throne forever and ever.

5. The work of the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized in connection with the birth of Jesus and his forerunner. The angel tells Zacharias that John shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and Zacharias himself is filled with the Holy Spirit when he utters his words of blessing after his long and chastening silence; the angel told Mary that the Holy Ghost should come upon her and the power of the Most High should overshadow her in that sacred and mys-

terious hour when she should conceive him who is to be called the Son of God. Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when she welcomed Mary, her cousin and prospective mother of her Lord and ours. Mary was evidently living in the very atmosphere created by the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament when she uttered her memorable song of praise. There is a twofold statement that Mary conceived Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Simeon had the Holy Spirit to come upon him in abiding power to guide him in his devotions and to reveal to him the fact that he should live to see the Christ who is the Light of the World.

With this glimpse into the conditions of our Saviour's entrance into the world, and the events connected directly and indirectly with his birth, infancy, childhood and young manhood, we shall next view him as he comes out from the prolonged seclusion of his Nazareth home to enter upon his public ministry as preacher, teacher, healer and redeemer.

CHAPTER II

THE PERIOD OF INITIATION—JESUS BEGINNING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

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      c. Jesus finds great joy in soul-winning
      d. Jesus lays the foundation of Christian work in Samaria
   3. Jesus spends two days at Sychar
   4. Jesus is welcomed in Galilee

CHAPTER II

THE PERIOD OF INITIATION—CHRIST BEGINNING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

I. Jesus and His Times

In the fulness of time Christ came into the world, wrought and died, conquered death, and gave the commandment to evangelize the world. The clock of providence always strikes twelve. There was an interesting combination of national and international elements conducive to the progress of the Gospel when Jesus entered upon his ministry. The universal empire guaranteed Roman protection throughout the entire world; the universal means of communication, or the Greek language, was the best means for the expression of a divine message; the universal peace gave a favourable opportunity for proclaiming the Gospel of the Prince of Peace; the universal consciousness of spiritual need predisposed the nations to listen to the divine remedy for sin; the universal hope in the midst of the moral and religious chaos found its sure anchorage in "the Rock of Ages."

Christ came into the world when all else had failed in the redemption of man. Greek philosophy and culture had shown their inability to satisfy man's spiritual longing; Roman law and material civilization proved ineffectual in supplying man's spiritual needs; Jewish

ritualism, both Biblical and traditional, was utterly futile in changing man's nature and giving him eternal life. At the historic point of man's conscious need and inability, Christ came into the world, "made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that are under the law."

While Jesus is growing to manhood in Nazareth, faithful in home, in carpenter shop and in synagogue service, John the Baptist is developing his striking personality in the rugged, thinly settled portion of Judea, whence he goes forth as a prophetic voice of the kingdom of heaven and the morning star of the new day of the Sun of Righteousness.

II. Christ and His Forerunner, John the Baptist

Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, foretold the coming of the Lord and the work of the messenger immediately preceding his advent (Malachi 3:1). This prophecy had its fulfilment in the person and work of John the Baptist.

1. John and his mission, Mark 1:2-6; Matthew 3:1-6; Luke 3:3-6.

John was a worthy son of pious parents, a true child of the desert, where he studied people one by one and nature in her rugged simplicity and grandeur. He developed a vigorous constitution which served well his strenuous ministry. He was a unique character, a mountain-peak personality, a commanding figure, a giant among the heroes of faith, a courageous preacher of righteousness, and the greatest out-of-door evangel-

ist and reformer the world has ever known. His manner was austere, like Elijah of old. He yielded not to the tide of fashion, yet made no effort to be queer. His food was the simplest diet of the desert—locusts and wild honey, and his clothing coarse but substantial —garments of camel's hair supported by a leathern girdle.

His power consisted not in his habits of dress and food and general appearance, but in his knowledge of God and man, his zeal for righteousness, his hatred of hypocrisy, his love of holiness, his conviction of a heavenly mission, his faith in the dawn of a Gospel day, and his appreciation of the coming Messiah. His stalwart manhood and transparent sincerity made him stand high above the religious leaders of his day.

The sublime mission of John was to prepare for the coming King, whose subjects must be right with God and man. The keynote of his preaching was repentance and faith, or a complete change in mind, heart and life, and a whole-hearted acceptance of him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. Because of their repentance and faith in Christ, the people were baptized as a token of their allegiance to the coming of their heavenly King.

2. John and his preaching, Mark 1:7, 8; Matthew 3:7-12; Luke 3:7-18.

Then, as now, highways were prepared for the visit of ancient monarchs, and roads created for the royal chariots; so John the Baptist's mission was to prepare for Jesus, the King who would come and reign in hearts made ready for his presence. It is not always easy for

a preacher to draw a crowd in the country or in the city, or from the country to the city; but the magnetism and the message of John drew the inhabitants of the country and the citizens of Jerusalem to the banks of the Jordan, where they heard and heeded his stirring messages. The sensation he created was extensive and intensive, spiritual and enduring.

Not only do we have on record the vital theme of John's preaching, but we also have a specimen of his messages which stirred all Judea and Jerusalem and all the region round about the Jordan into a mighty revival of spiritual religion. The preaching of John drew not only the masses of the people, but also the critical classes of religious leadership. The self-righteous Pharisees and the aristocratic Sadducees came to hear him preach and to see the multitudes baptized in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. Like so many other effective public speakers, John was a good judge of human nature. To a large extent he knew what was in man. He, therefore, fearlessly laid bare the sins of the people. No soothing and flattering compliments fell from his lips, but out of his mouth came a two-edged sword. He dared to call the irreligious leaders of religion an " offspring of vipers " and demanded of them what he did of common people and social outcasts—a life of words and deeds in proof of genuine repentance.

John warned the people against religious pride and dependence upon a pious ancestry as a substitute for personal righteousness. He taught that it is not enough to be a physical descendant of Abraham, but in order

to be truly religious one must have the faith of Abraham. God is not dependent upon the Hebrews for a people; he can take Gentiles, stones or hard-hearted heathen and transform them into children of the divine household. He told the religious leaders that it was not their physical descent from Abraham but their spiritual condition that determined their relation to God. Thus he removed by one keen stroke the foundation of religious pride.

The approaching kingdom ushered in the day of retribution and of Jewish opportunity. John showed that the useless life, like the fruitless tree, is doomed to destruction. He was pointed, personal and practical in his preaching. He not only proclaimed the truth but applied it to specific classes. His aim was to help people live out their fleeting day in the sphere they then occupied. When the multitudes asked what they must do he told them to be kind, generous, imparting food and clothing; the tax gatherers he warned against graft, which was their besetting sin; upon the soldiers he urged mildness in the treatment of others and contentment with their meagre wages. He elicited questions from his hearers and gave answers that went home to mind and heart. He drove the nail to its head and riveted it on the other side.

John's message centred in the person of Jesus, whom he exalted and adored. He humbly confessed his littleness in the presence of the Messiah's greatness. He felt unworthy to take off the sandals from Christ's pilgrim feet. He portrayed Christ to the people at the psychological moment when they were at the height of

expectancy and in quivering suspense as to the identity of the Messiah. They thought that perhaps John himself was the promised deliverer, thus overestimating John and undervaluing Christ. Christ was portrayed as sovereign and John as the humblest slave; Christ performed a variety of deeds that belong alone to God, while John had no divine prerogative; Christ imparted spiritual gifts, and possessed the attributes and exercised the prerogatives of deity in relation to human character and destiny. Christ alone could baptize the believer in the Holy Spirit and the unbeliever in fire. He alone could gather the wheat into the heavenly garner and burn up the chaff in unquenchable fire.

3. John and Jesus at the Jordan, Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. John preached and the people practised the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, or a baptism which symbolized that change of heart and life which secured the remission of sins. Jesus was at Nazareth, about sixty miles from the scene of John's evangelistic activities. Multitudes of believers were baptized in the River Jordan, confessing their sins (Mark 1:10). At the providential moment Jesus, being about thirty years of age, left the home of his childhood and early manhood and went (perhaps walked) to the Jordan, where John was preaching and baptizing. He solemnly breaks the ties of his Nazareth home, urged on by the consciousness of a mighty mission. When he bids farewell to Joseph and Mary there is a sweet, overpowering solemnity and a mean-

ingful silence. He is launching out from the haven of his home upon the great sea of his turbulent life. Mary has new significant things to ponder in her heart.

On reaching the Jordan Jesus came, as thousands had done, and requested baptism at the hands of John. The Baptist recognized in the earnest applicant for baptism elements of superiority and divinity that made him shrink from the holy task and express a desire to receive baptism at the hands of Jesus. Thus a good man stood, though only for a moment, in the way of Christ's performing his first public act, simply because he did not understand.

Jesus had no sin to confess, but as the perfect Son of the righteous Father it became part of divine wisdom for him to perform every act of righteousness which he expected those who believed in him and loved him to perform. The reluctance of John is easily overcome, and immediately after Jesus was baptized he came up out of the water, and while praying the heavens were opened and the Spirit descended in bodily form, as a dove, and the Father spoke words of divine approval. Baptism is not a creative but a declarative act; it did not make Jesus the Son of God, but he, being the Son of God, always did those things well pleasing in the Father's sight. There is a clear revelation of the trinity at the sweet moment of prayer on the banks of the Jordan. Through the open heavens the Holy Spirit descended, assuming the form of a dove, and to the obedient Son the Father spoke the words of commendation and good cheer, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." In the

power of the Spirit, and in the joy of the Father's approval, Christ was publicly introduced to his Messianic work.

III. Jesus and Satan, Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

The most severe temptations often come immediately after the most precious spiritual experiences. Under the impelling influence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus goes from the scene of his baptism, amid the earnest throngs and the heavenly vision, to some lonely waste among the mountains with wild beasts near by, the desolate battleground of his decisive conflict. Eden was lost through the first Adam's yielding to temptation. Shall the second Adam resist unto victory and reopen the gates to man's first estate and more?

For forty days Jesus fasts and prays and thinks on the mission of his life. At the close of this period the pangs of hunger come with the awful reaction of the six weeks' strain, and Satan is quick to seize the first opportunity to mar the mission and deny the deity of the Son of God. Satan evidently witnessed the baptism of Jesus and heard the Father's approving voice. He saw in Christ the hope of man's redemption and therefore planned his defeat at the opening of his career.

Satan's first campaign against Jesus consisted of three attacks well planned and skilfully executed. He issued his challenge and launched his offensive at the psychological moment, following Christ's baptism, and the spiritual exaltation resulting from his public obedi-

ence and the Father's approving voice. It came at the end of forty days' fasting, when the pangs of hunger cried aloud for gratification.

1. The First Temptation.

In the first temptation there is the appeal to the love of pleasure, or the appeal through personal comfort. "If" is Satan's favourite missile. He knows the citadel of Christ's person and power. At Christ's baptism the heavenly voice had proclaimed him as the Son of God. This testimony Satan does not *deny,* but assumes it to be a fact. "If thou art the Son of God, then take matters in your own hands and use your own superhuman power for your own personal ends." This indirect method of attack is often the most insidious and dangerous. "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread, so that thou mayest satisfy thy physical necessities." It was an effort to induce Christ to use his miraculous power for his bodily comfort rather than trust in God for providential relief. It was a temptation to underconfidence and distrust in God through an appeal for immediate self-gratification. Christ wins by one keen thrust of the word, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

2. The Second Temptation.

In the second temptation there is an appeal to the love of popularity, or the appeal through public sentiment. Naturally a king desires to please his subjects, and Satan endeavours to get Christ to yield to public sentiment which demanded a sign, craved the spectac-

ular, the picturesque and the miraculous. The deceptive "if" is again employed; if Christ is the Son of God, why should he not cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and trust in God for angelic support? Christ could win the applause of the multitude by such a demonstration. This was a temptation to over-confidence, to presume on the goodness of God and to yield to the appeal through self-adulation. Christ wins again by another stroke of the sword of the Spirit, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"

3. The Third Temptation.

In the third temptation there is an appeal to the love of power, or an appeal through political preferment. Satan claims control of human governments and promises Jesus second place in organized society. Only an "if" stands between Jesus and universal dominion, but in that potent word is the difference between defeat and victory. Christ is tempted to gain dominion by compromise, by subordination, by paying deference to one personality, only one, but that one is Satan. To yield on this point is to abandon his sovereignty, to cease the moral warfare of the ages, to take second place through cowardice and compromise. It is a temptation to other confidence than God, to surrender to organized human government, and to cooperate with worldly empires by incorporation into their plans and subordination to their ideas, to yield to the appeal through self-exaltation, which is in reality self-degradation. To make this compromise would put Christ next to Satan, while he deserves to sit upon the throne of universal and everlasting dominion. Christ

vanquishes Satan by another quotation from Deuteronomy, " Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Completely defeated in every attack, Satan gives up the conflict for the time being, but watches for another opportunity to accomplish his wicked designs. Satan leaves him and angels minister to him. What a happy exchange of company for the victorious Christ! Such is the blessed result of Christ's first hard-fought duel with Satan, who ever seeks the dethronement of God and the debasement of man.

IV. John's Testimony Concerning Jesus

1. Jesus attested by John the Baptist before a Committee of the Sanhedrin, John 1:19-28.

John the Baptist continues his work in Bethany, east of the Jordan. After baptizing Jesus, so great is John's success that the Pharisees in Jerusalem send a commission of Sadducees, or priests and Levites, to ascertain his religious rating. They make a direct appeal to the Baptist himself and ask pointedly, " Who art thou? "—thinking that perhaps he was the promised Messiah. He denies being the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet that should come into the world and speak with divine authority. He identifies himself as " the voice of one crying in the wilderness," according to the words of Isaiah, the prophet. He was a heavenly voice calling the people to a new life necessary for the enjoyment of the privileges of the kingdom of God which is just at hand. The committee does not understand why he should baptize the people if he is not

Christ, Elijah, or the prophet. John says that his baptism, though important, is only in water, but Christ's baptism shall be in the Holy Spirit; that he is unworthy to rank as a menial slave to Christ, who is infinitely his superior in person and work.

2. Jesus is identified as Messiah by John the Baptist, John 1:29-34.

Soon after his victory in the wilderness, Jesus goes to Bethany, east of the Jordan, where John is still preaching and baptizing. He appears quietly on the scene the day after the Jerusalem committee has its interview with John. As Jesus approaches, John bears witness to the people concerning him, describing him as the one who fulfilled Jewish sacrifices and is therefore the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. He testifies that Jesus is the fulfilment of the whole sacrificial Jewish system, that he existed before coming into the world, and is the person whom the Holy Spirit identified as the Son of God.

V. Jesus Wins His First Disciples, John 1:35-51

John's chief work was to make ready a people for the Messiah. Naturally we would expect Jesus to gather his first followers from those whom John had baptized. They had already been taught that Jesus is the Lamb of God, in whom they are to believe, and the Son of God, whom they are to obey.

The day after John identified Jesus as the Messiah to the multitudes, he and two of his disciples were standing in the way, and, seeing Jesus as he walked alone, he repeated the declaration of the day before,

saying, " Behold, the Lamb of God." Instantly the two disciples transferred masters, leaving John and following Jesus. In this quiet manner Jesus began his mastery over the lives of men. To John belongs the honour of initiating the great campaign of introducing individuals to Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

These two disciples, upon the invitation of Jesus, spent the day with him, and so meaningful was the occasion that years afterward the very hour is remembered. One of the two was Andrew, and the other one was most probably John. The first thing Andrew did was to bear personal testimony that Jesus is the Messiah and to bring his brother, Peter, to Jesus. Andrew never did a better day's work than when he won his own brother to Christ. He was not a great preacher but an effective personal worker. Perhaps John won his brother, James, on the same occasion. What a wonderful day when four men surrender to Jesus as the Messianic King! What a small but significant beginning with four men, two sets of brothers, destined to become immortal in their work for Christ.

The next day is also significant for the kingdom of heaven. On the eve of leaving the scene of John's baptism and going into Galilee, Jesus says to Philip, " Follow me," and another disciple of John becomes a follower of Jesus. Immediately he tells his fellow-townsman, Nathanael, that he has found the one of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. Nathanael is hesitant, or even skeptical, so without argument Philip says, " Come and see for yourself." Nathanael accepts the invitation and is at once recog-

nized by Jesus, whose superhuman knowledge completely wins his confidence, and he exclaims, "Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!".

VI. Jesus Works His First Miracle in Cana of Galilee, John 2:1-11

An invitation to a marriage has been accepted, so Jesus and his disciples leave the Jordan for Cana of Galilee, taking three days for the journey. Jesus was no recluse; he entered into the joys of social life, multiplying and purifying all its legitimate pleasures. His mother was hostess at the marriage in Cana, only a few miles from Nazareth, and the whole family was invited. The mild wine used on such festive occasions was soon exhausted, and Mary reported the fact to Jesus with a hint that he come to the rescue, for with her keen intuition she had already seen in him superhuman characteristics. He, however, has a divine program to carry out, and the clock of providence must not be hastened an hour, not even a minute. He will work when his hour comes, and not until then. With a courteous firmness he said to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour has not yet come." His hour, however, did come that very day, but was not hastened by even a mother's suggestion. Not circumvented in the least by his seeming refusal, Mary says to the servants, "Whatsoever he sayeth unto you, do it." She thus recognizes his authority, so he immediately arranges for the first miracle. The six water-pots are filled with water which, under his divine touch, becomes the best of wine and enough for all.

Jesus thus performed his first miracle, called a *sign,* because it has such vital significance, revealing as it does Christ's personal and official glory, and confirming the faith of his first six disciples and showing to all the transforming power of his presence.

What an eventful week, yet how quiet and unostentatious. On the first day the committee from Jerusalem interrogate John concerning his person and mission and his relation to Christ. On the second day John bears witness to the multitude concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. On the third day the first four disciples are brought into personal allegiance to Christ. On the fourth day Philip and Nathanael believe in Jesus and cast their lot with him and the original four; then comes a journey from the Jordan to Cana, and three days after, or the seventh day after the visit of the Jerusalem committee, the first miracle is performed and the divine glory of Christ is revealed.

VII. Jesus Makes His First Sojourn in Capernaum, John 2:12

The wedding festival being over in Cana, Jesus, Mary, his mother, his younger brothers and the six newly-called disciples make a brief visit to Capernaum, which is soon to become headquarters for Christ's great work in Galilee. This is a prospecting tour, and Jesus doubtless gets a glimpse into the home life of Peter and Andrew and James and John, who lived in Capernaum, and of Philip and Nathanael, who lived in Bethsaida, not far away, on the north side of the lake.

VIII. Jesus Visits Jerusalem

1. Jesus cleanses the Temple for the first time, John 2:13-22.

Jesus cleansed the temple twice during his public ministry—once near its beginning and once near its close. After a brief visit to Capernaum, Jesus attends the first of the three or four Passovers of his ministry. On entering the temple he becomes indignant at the merchants and bankers who carry on their traffic under pretense of providing sacrifices—sheep, oxen, doves and Jewish coin in exchange for foreign money, partly to accommodate the worshippers, but chiefly to benefit themselves financially. Jesus perceives the profanation of the temple through extortion and worldly greed. With Messianic authority he says, "Take these things hence. Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." By the same right he drives out the sheep and oxen with a scourge of small cords and overthrows the tables used by money-changers. His great zeal for the sanctity of the temple, and the majesty of his manner, make a profound impression upon all, and especially upon his disciples. The Jews hypocritically demand a sign to substantiate his authority for such acts; hence the reply is enigmatical, having a parabolic reference to the temple but a real application to his resurrection. He says, "Destroy (not indicative, 'I will destroy,' but imperative, 'You destroy,') this temple ('my body'), and in three days I will raise it again." They miss his meaning by applying his words to the temple they have desecrated. Blinded by prejudice and sin, Jesus lets them

wrestle with the meaning of the sign of his Messianic authority, which they wilfully reject.

2. Jesus has his first extended interview with an individual, Nicodemus, John 2:23-3:21.

Jesus performed many miracles, and many believed on him at the Passover; the faith of some was superficial and temporary, that of others deep and abiding. Christ's perfect knowledge of human nature caused him to hold himself in reserve and not to commit himself completely into the hands of Jewish leaders.

As a class, the Pharisees blindly and vehemently rejected Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry. But there were some exceptions, notably Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin and teacher in Israel and a seeker after truth. For convenience and quietude, and perhaps from timidity, he visited Jesus by night and recognized in him a teacher come from God and authenticated by miracles as signs of a divine mission. Jesus at once revealed to the ruler the need of a spiritual change in every class and individual that would fully appreciate the redemptive reign of God. Christ goes to the core of the matter by appealing to the heart of Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man (any and every one) be born again he cannot see (experience and enjoy) the kingdom of God (God's reign in heart and life)." Nicodemus immediately thinks of the difficulty of a second physical birth, and thus misses the vital point in Christ's solemn declaration. To make the truth he wishes to impart unmistakably clear, Jesus refers both to nature and to providence in illustration of the new birth, or

the vital spiritual change so essential in every man who would enter the kingdom of God.

As the body needs water, a symbol of spiritual cleansing, so the soul needs the Holy Spirit, who purifies the heart and transforms the life. There are two, not three, births in the life of the believer; not a birth of the flesh, another of the Spirit and a third of water; but a birth of the flesh, and the birth of the Spirit symbolized by water. As the natural birth introduces one into the physical family, so the birth of the Spirit brings one into the family of the kingdom of God.

All life is a mystery in its origin, continuance and end. Jesus takes the wind as a simple and well-known fact in nature to illustrate the vital and fundamental fact essential in Christian experience. The source, movement and destination of the wind are mysterious, even in our age of science, but its effects are evident, visible and palpable. The mystery of the spiritual life should not lead to a rejection of the Holy Spirit, who alone can produce it.

Jesus takes an illustration from providence. Moses erected a brazen serpent in the wilderness, and the bitten Israelites had only to look and to live. How the cure was effected is beyond explanation, but the method is simple—"Look." Even so is human redemption mysterious in its plan, but simple in its application, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The love of God provided salvation in Christ, and faith in him secures eternal life. Leave the mystery of the new birth to God and his saving Spirit, who alone can make man appreciate and enter the kingdom of God, and believe in Jesus Christ, and you shall never perish, but have now and evermore eternal life.

In Christ is life and light. Faith in Jesus not only gives imperishable life, but inextinguishable light. The new life of the Spirit and faith avoids the deeds of night and welcomes the works of day.

Through the gloom of perplexity Nicodemus came into true light, though not with the highest courage and heroism, and yet showed his loyalty to Christ amid the lengthening shadows of the cross.

IX. Jesus Works Simultaneously with John in Judea, John 3:22-36

The scant success of Christ in Judea and Pharisaic opposition in Jerusalem were followed by encouraging yet perplexing results in Judea, where his work and that of John the Baptist ran parallel for a season. There was a murmuring in the ranks of John's disciples because many of them followed Jesus. Some of them appeal to their master with jealous fear because men are flocking to Christ rather than to John. He assures them of his own joy at Christ's success. He reasserts that Jesus is the real Christ. He himself is like the friend of a bridegroom, while Jesus is the groom. He, therefore, is willing to decrease in his power to secure

a following if only Christ can increase in his influence to win disciples.

John's own joy and success are determined by his power to direct men to Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, for Jesus is the Son of God, and to him the Holy Spirit is given without measure. Eternal issues are not determined by men's relation to John, but by their attitude toward Jesus. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

X. Jesus Leaves Judea for Galilee, Evangelizing on the Way

1. Reasons for leaving Judea, John 4:1-4; Luke 3:19-20; Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:14.

Jesus had at least six helpers in Judea who baptized by his authority, so that he did not himself baptize anyone, but confined his labours to teaching, performing miracles and doing personal work. Christ's success in Judea surpassed even that of John the Baptist and aroused the jealousy of the Pharisees, thus creating a crisis in the relation of the work of John the Baptist and that of Christ. About the same time the loyal, heroic John is incarcerated in the royal prison at Machærus, east of the Dead Sea. This was the penalty inflicted upon John because he rebuked Herod Antipas for his manifold wickedness, and especially for his unholy alliance with Herodias, the wife of Herod Philip, a man in private station though a brother of the king. Herod gave as a pretext for the apprehen-

sion and imprisonment of John the fear of a rebellion through the great religious revolution brought about by the preaching of the Baptist. In these circumstances Jesus decided that it was best for him to leave Judea and depart again into Galilee, where he would inaugurate a more vigorous and independent campaign outside the atmosphere contaminated by the jealousy of the Pharisees and John's disciples, and beyond the domain of Herod Antipas, who had no special fondness for religious reformers and courageous preachers like John and Jesus. To reach his destination in Galilee, Jesus must needs pass through Samaria. The necessity was geographical if he desired to take the shortest route, and also providential if he would give the Samaritans an opportunity to become his followers.

2. Jesus wins the Samaritan woman and other Samaritans, John 4:5-39.

Jesus is on his way to Galilee and wearied with his journey. Upon reaching Jacob's well he sits upon the curbing in a state of physical exhaustion. It was about noon, and, needing a quiet hour, he sends his disciples to the nearby town of Sychar to buy provisions for their frugal meal. But not long is Jesus alone. A woman from the village comes to the well for a pitcher of water. Though every person is a gospel opportunity, everything seems unpropitious for personal work. Jesus is tired, the woman is in a hurry; he is a Jew, she is a Samaritan; he is a religious teacher, she is a woman of objectionable character; the meeting seems purely incidental and accidental, and they are absolute

strangers to each other. But the passion of Jesus for her salvation makes him forget the hunger and weariness of the flesh and the seemingly insuperable difficulties of the situation. In a courteous manner he breaks the silence by a simple request, "Woman, give me to drink." She is astonished at his word because of their difference in nationality, for the Samaritans were half Jews, and between the two races there was intense hatred.

Christ passes, with infinite skill, from the water in the well to the water of life which only he could give and which alone could satisfy the thirsty soul. She asks for the water he promises, but is still literal in her interpretation, so Jesus penetrates her life and lifts the veil by asking her to call her husband. She replies by saying she has no husband; then Jesus reads aloud to her the blotted pages out of the book of her sad social life. She instantly perceives him to be a prophet; then at once she springs an old, bitter theological question rife among Jews and Samaritans, and asks him to settle the geography of worship—whether Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim, visible from Jacob's well, is the place of acceptable service to God. Promptly Jesus teaches her that since God is a Spirit true worship may be rendered anywhere if only given in spirit and in truth.

The woman now reveals her hope of a brighter day of religious knowledge when the Messiah of the Jews and of the Samaritans would come into the world. Her heart is now ready for that personal revelation of Jesus which is his supreme joy to make to every soul

prepared to receive it, and he said unto her, "I that speak unto thee am he."

At that critical moment the disciples returned and marvelled that he should so violate oriental custom as to be speaking with a woman outside of the family circle. Then she, in joyful haste and forgetfulness, leaves her water-pot and becomes the first city missionary, inviting even the men of her town to come and see the Christ she had found. And Jesus is happier than the woman; he refuses to eat, despite the insistence of his disciples, who had brought food from the village. The joy of his heart has relieved the hunger of his body, and the feast of the soul is enough for the present.

The one Samaritan sheaf suggests the ripeness of a vast harvest field where some sow and others reap and all share alike in the blessedness of reward. Jesus sows the first seed from which Philip, the evangelist, will soon reap an abundant harvest (Acts 8).

3. Jesus spends two days at Sychar, John 4:40-42.

The testimony of the woman wins many Samaritans to faith in Christ, who yields to their urgent invitation to abide with them for a season. For two days Jesus taught in the village and many believed his word and confessed him to be the Saviour of the world—the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles.

4. Jesus is welcomed in Galilee, John 4:43-45.

After the two fruitful days spent in Sychar, Jesus continues his journey northward, because a prophet seldom receives due honour in his own country, and

he had been rejected by the leaders of the nation at Jerusalem.

Many Galileans had been to the Passover Jesus recently attended, and had reached their home in advance of his arrival, owing to his gracious labours in Samaria. These open-hearted Galileans had witnessed his miracles in Jerusalem and therefore gave him a glad welcome into their own country. Thus the sun rises bright upon the opening day of Christ's Galilean labours.

CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF PROPAGATION—JESUS INAUGURATING HIS CAMPAIGN

(From the close of Jesus' early Judean ministry to the choice of the Twelve)

I. Preliminary Activities in Galilee and the Establishment of Headquarters at Capernaum
   1. Jesus preaches the Gospel in Galilee with astonishing results
   2. Jesus performs his second miracle at Cana
   3. Jesus preaches in Nazareth for the first time
   4. Jesus establishes headquarters at Capernaum

II. Significant Events in Capernaum
   1. Jesus recalls four fishermen to become fishers of men
      a. Peter and Andrew are called
      b. James and John are called
   2. Jesus teaches and heals a demoniac in the synagogue on the Sabbath day
      a. Jesus' custom as to Sabbath observance
      b. Jesus heals a demoniac
   3. Jesus performs many miracles at the home of Simon Peter
      a. Peter a married man
      b. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law
      c. Jesus heals many at the door of Peter's house

III. Jesus Makes His First Tour of Galilee
   1. Jesus inaugurates his campaign with prayer
      a. The preparation of prayer
      b. Jesus is discovered at prayer
      c. Jesus inaugurates a threefold ministry of teaching, preaching and healing
   2. Jesus heals a leper and creates great excitement

IV. Jesus Returns to Capernaum and Continues His Work of Healing, Winning and Teaching
   1. Jesus provokes the criticism of the Scribes and Pharisees by forgiving the sins of a paralytic and healing his body
      a. A hostile element is present in the crowd
      b. Jesus heals a paralytic's body and forgives his sins
      c. A joyful beneficiary
   2. Jesus calls Matthew to be his follower and attends a reception given by the new disciple
      a. Matthew is called and readily responds
      b. Matthew gives a banquet in honour of Jesus

3. Jesus expounds the true doctrine of fasting and feasting
   a. Two classes of critics are present at Matthew's feast
   b. Jesus makes a threefold reply to the question about fasting and feasting: (1) Inappropriate for wedding guests to mourn while the bridegroom is alive and well; (2) the parable of the rent garment; (3) the parable of the new wine and old wine-skins

V. Jesus Heals a Lame Man on the Sabbath in Jerusalem and Precipitates the Great Sabbath Controversy
   1. The scene of the first stage of this controversy is in Jerusalem
      a. Jesus heals a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda
      b. The "Jews" persecute Jesus for Sabbath-breaking
      c. Jesus asserts his divine sonship
      d. Jesus introduces four witnesses to prove his claim to deity: John the Baptist; the work of Jesus; the Father who sent him; and the Scriptures
      e. The enemies of Jesus plot his destruction
   2. The scene of the second stage of the great Sabbath controversy changes from Jerusalem to a grain field through which Jesus and his disciples passed on their way back to Galilee
      a. The occasion of the controversy
      b. Jesus employs five arguments in defense of his conduct
         (1) The argument based on the principle of necessity
         (2) The argument based on the principle of service
         (3) The argument based on the principle of kindness
         (4) The argument based on the principle of authority
         (5) The argument based on the principle of philanthropy
   3. The third stage of the Sabbath controversy takes place in Galilee and is characterized by increased intensity
      a. The place and circumstances of the renewal of the controversy
      b. Jesus defends his action by an appeal to common sense
      c. Jesus defiantly and publicly heals a withered hand

VI. Jesus Returns to the Sea of Galilee, where He Teaches and Heals the Eager Multitudes
   1. The magnetism of Jesus
      a. Multitudes are drawn to him from various cities
      b. Increased popularity and hatred
   2. The nature of the kingdom
      a. Contrasted with the popular Jewish idea of the kingdom
      b. Jesus feels the necessity of helpers

CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF PROPAGATION—CHRIST INAUGURATING HIS CAMPAIGN

From the Close of Christ's Early Judean Ministry to the Choice of the Twelve

After his rejection by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, his wonderful success in Judea and Samaria, and the imprisonment of John the Baptist, Jesus inaugurated an independent, comprehensive and progressive campaign in Galilee. We are indebted to John's Gospel for an account of Christ's early Judean ministry, or the year of obscurity. The Synoptic Gospels begin with Christ's great Galilean ministry, or the year of popularity, which John touches only occasionally.

I. Preliminary Activities in Galilee and the Establishment of Headquarters in Capernaum

1. Christ preaches the Gospel in Galilee with astonishing results, Mark 1:14, 15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:14, 15.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus entered upon his work in Galilee, where he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. He proclaimed the same message that was preached by John the Baptist, saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." He

announced the arrival of the Messianic era and demanded a turning from sin and a personal faith in himself as conditions of entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

2. Christ performs his second miracle at Cana, John 4:46-54.

Christ performed his first miracle at Cana when he made water, wine; he wrought other signs in Jerusalem and began his Galilean ministry by performing his second miracle at Cana. The news of Christ's departure from Judea to Galilee spread extensively and rapidly, and soon reached the ears of a king's officer, whose son was in Capernaum lying at the point of death. The father appealed to Jesus in person, beseeching him to come down and heal his son. In his reply, Jesus classifies the courtier with the Jerusalem leaders who demanded a sign before they believed. The nobleman accepts the challenge of faith, telling Jesus that not even his presence is necessary; only his word, spoken at a distance, would have healing power. Jesus rewarded his faith by curing his son that very hour. On reaching home the next day, the father verified both the time and completeness of his son's restoration. The effect of this instantaneous cure at a distance was to win the Gentile courtier and his entire family to faith in Christ—the first household of believers of which we have any record.

3. Jesus preaches in Nazareth for the first time, Luke 4:16-31.

Naturally, Jesus would give the town, in which he had been brought up and spent the first thirty years

of his life, an opportunity to hear his message. The habit of his life, formed early and gladly continued, was to attend the synagogue services every Sabbath. The customs of youth are easily continued in manhood. On one of the ordinary Sabbaths, destined to be memorable in the history of the town, Jesus entered the synagogue and, according to Jewish ritual, signified his willingness to conduct the services. A roll of Isaiah was given him by the librarian, and he easily and purposely found the passage most appropriate to the occasion, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord " (Isaiah 61:1, 2). Having finished reading, Jesus took his seat, signifying his willingness to speak, as it was customary to stand while reading but to sit while teaching or preaching. Christ's manner, tone and emphasis made an unusually profound impression upon the congregation, and their eyes were fastened upon him in rapt attention. His first sentence drove home the vital truth, " To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." His unrecorded discourse made the audience wonder at the words of grace, the words of beauty and power which proceeded out of his mouth. They had never before heard such a sermon. But how does it affect their faith and attitude toward him? They have mingled feelings which he read in the open book of their countenance. Evidently they wonder, hesitate, disbelieve. Jesus knows they will demand miracles to

justify his Messianic claims, and if performed would not remove their unbelief. He sees the issue and accepts the unuttered challenge of their hearts. He feels the chill of rejection by his own people and is upheld by the consciousness of God's sovereign and elective grace. He shows them that God's hands are open in mercy to those beyond even the chosen people, who prove to be rebellious children. Jesus cites instances in Old Testament history which prove that the mercies of God fall upon even Gentile hearts. The Gentile widow, in the famine-stricken days of Elisha, was fed, though many Jewish widows perished with hunger; a Syrian leper, Naaman, was healed, though many lepers in Israel died in loathsome isolation.

The approving wonder of the audience is suddenly changed to murderous wrath. The services are broken up with mob violence. The enraged congregation would throw him headlong down the nearby cliff, but his gentle majesty and divine personality restrain their wickedness, and he passes through the midst of them unafraid and unharmed.

4. Christ establishes his headquarters at Capernaum, Matthew 4:13-16.

It is evident from his rejection by his own townsmen that Jesus cannot make Nazareth the centre of his activities in Galilee. He, therefore, wisely selects Capernaum, a large cosmopolitan city on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, as his headquarters. In so doing he fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah, who foretold the coming of a great light in the land where both Jews and Gentiles could walk in the brightness of its shining.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, brought up in Nazareth, lived in Capernaum, and died in Jerusalem. He thus immortalized four cities in a life remarkable for its brevity and its glory.

II. Significant Events in Capernaum. A Call to Service and a "Busy Sabbath"

1. Jesus recalls four fishermen to become fishers of men, Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11.

The home of Jesus in Capernaum was probably the residence of Simon Peter. Being permanently located for his aggressive campaign, Jesus takes steps to secure workers for his great task. Multitudes listen to him in the open air by the seaside and press upon him with eagerness to hear the word of God. So, from Peter's boat, he teaches them in the early morning. The sermon being over, Christ's personal work begins. He now "calls out the called." He appeals to four of the disciples of John the Baptist, Peter and Andrew, James and John, who had become the first disciples of Jesus in Bethany, beyond the Jordan. That first call was to personal faith in Jesus and not to a continuous following in his varied journeys. Hence they had gone to their homes and business when Jesus returned from Judea into Galilee. It seems that they were not with him on his second visit to Cana and his first visit to Nazareth. After a sermon from Peter's boat, resting near the shore, Jesus says, "Launch out into the deep and let down your net for a draught." In view of the futile experience of the previous night, Peter is doubtful of results, but promptly obeys the word of Jesus,

and lo! the nets enclose enough fish to fill not only Simon's boat but also the boat of James and John—two other members of the fishing corporation of which Simon was the president.

The astonishing results so humbled Simon Peter that he fell at Jesus' feet and confessed that he was unworthy even to be in Christ's presence. Using the language of Simon's calling, Jesus says, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." This promotion in the vocation of Peter and his brother, Andrew, is appreciated and accepted and, immediately leaving their business, they follow Jesus.

A little later Jesus sees another pair of brothers, James and John, in a boat mending their nets, and extends to them a similar call to a life of service: "Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men." They do not hesitate for a moment. They first believed in Jesus on the banks of the Jordan, and now, on the shores of Galilee, they make the great surrender to leave all and follow him evermore. Their father and the hired servants are left to carry on the old family occupation and catch fish from the lake. They will follow the new calling and catch men in the murky waters of sin. These four fishermen are destined to become four of Christ's most faithful and useful apostles.

2. Jesus teaches and heals a demoniac in the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37.

Jesus had been brought up to attend Sabbath services in the synagogue, and this good habit he main-

tained unbroken through life. Whether on seashore, or in the synagogue, he taught the word of God with freshness and power, and not like the scribes, who gave out lifeless and juiceless comments and copious quotations musty with age.

One of the auditors was a man with an unclean spirit. The teaching of Christ was so pointed and authoritative that the unclean spirit recognized in the speaker Jesus of Nazareth and the Holy One of God and cried out in fear of immediate punishment. He felt keenly the contrast between his uncleanness and Christ's holiness. Jesus said to the spirit, who was malignant and personal, " Keep quiet and come out of the man." Then with terrific convulsions, as if tearing the man in pieces, the spirit obeyed the command of Jesus. The report of Christ's victory over the unclean spirit, his deep interest in afflicted humanity and his marvellous teaching spread far and wide, creating an ever-increasing tide of religious enthusiasm.

3. Jesus performs many miracles at the home of Simon Peter, Mark 1:29-34; Matthew 8:14-17; Luke 4:38-41.

Peter's native city was Bethsaida, but he now lives in Capernaum. He was married when called to be a disciple, and when I Corinthians was written, A. D. 57, his wife was able to accompany him in his missionary journey (I Cor. 9:5).

We have here a glimpse of one of the many busy Sabbaths in our Lord's eventful ministry. The synagogue services being over, Jesus went into the house of

Simon Peter, either by special invitation or because he made his home with Simon. Andrew, the brother of Peter, James and John, and Jesus at least were guests on that busy Sabbath. Peter's mother-in-law was stricken with a "great fever" (Luke 4:38), and Jesus is immediately urged to come and heal her. He promptly responds and, taking her by the hand, rebukes the fever. She straightway arises, strong and well, and begins to look after the various household duties and the comfort of the guests.

At the cool of the day, and therefore after the Sabbath which ended at sunset, a multitude of afflicted persons was brought to the door of Peter's house, and Jesus gave the hand-touch of sympathy and healing. Even evil spirits recognized Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and he cast them out with a word of rebuke, enjoining absolute silence to prevent undue excitement. Jesus trusted more to the effect of his teaching than to the result of his miracles. Thus closed a blessed Sabbath: in the synagogue, the teaching and healing a demoniac; in Simon's house after service, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law; at the door of the house, the healing of multitudes after the sun went down.

III. Jesus Makes His First Tour of Galilee, Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44

We have recorded at least three great preaching tours Jesus made throughout Galilee, and there were doubtless many other brief journeys made with Capernaum as the centre.

1. Christ inaugurates his campaign with prayer.

Owing to the popular excitement over Christ's words and works, and his desire to preach the Gospel to the needy multitudes, Jesus inaugurated his great Galilean campaign. Long before day he arose and left Capernaum for a desert place, to be free from human disturbance, and there prayed alone as he only could pray. Life's crises require special praying to transmute them into achievements. Every great religious movement is begun in prayer; is inaugurated as man and God come together.

But Jesus is soon discovered. Peter and the multitude, that sought him until they found him, beseech him to remain in Capernaum. In reply he utters the sublime words of life's holy imperative, " I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities, for therefore was I sent."

Christ projected his campaign along three lines of activity (Matt. 4:23), " Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." *Christ taught,* and thus emphasized the educational aspect of the kingdom, and laid the foundation for the development of the mind, for imparting worthy knowledge of God's word and God's world, all the way from the simple truths taught in the home to the advanced culture of a Christian university. *Christ preached,* and thus accentuated the evangelistic elements of the kingdom and laid the foundation for the redemption of the soul, for proclaiming to all individuals, all classes and all na-

tions, the glad tidings of salvation through faith in his name. *Christ healed,* and thus illustrated the philanthropic element in the work of the kingdom and laid the foundation for the amelioration of the body, for engaging in all phases of humanitarian activity relating to man's physical welfare. Thus Christ's work expressed in principle and illustrated in action mental instruction, spiritual redemption and physical restoration.

In carrying out his program we establish our schools, construct our churches and build our philanthropic institutions. Christ cared for the whole man in all of life's relations, his mind, soul and body in relation to God and to our fellow-men. Vital and progressive Christianity will endeavour to continue to do what Jesus *began* and to illustrate the words of Jesus (John 14:12), "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father."

2. Christ heals a leper and creates great excitement, Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 5:12-16.

The report of Christ's work extended not only over Galilee but down south to Judea and Samaria and east of the Jordan to the region of the ten Greek cities, known as Decapolis, and into Syria. We have no record in the Gospels of the places he visited and the sermons he preached, and only one miracle is reported during his first tour. A leper, despairing in his loathsome isolation, heard of the power of Christ that was being so beneficently exercised in healing the sick and casting out demons. He doubts not the ability of

Christ to heal even leprosy, but is hardly able to believe that Jesus is willing to do so. No instance of curing this disease had been reported; perhaps none had occurred. The leper shows his deep earnestness and confidence in Jesus by running to him, falling down at his feet and beseeching him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The heart of Jesus is peculiarly moved with compassion, and to the leper's joyful surprise he touches him, without fear, and with the tenderness of a woman, and speaks the healing word. Jesus enjoins perfect silence upon the healed leper and directs him to fulfil the Mosaic requirements in such a case, but the impulse of gratitude and the joy of being healed were stronger than the prohibition of Jesus; so wherever he went he spread the good news, increasing thereby the already too great excitement created by the miracles of Jesus. The thoughtless zeal of the leper so aroused the enthusiasm of the masses to hear and to be healed by Jesus that he could no more publicly enter the cities, but withdrew to a desert place for prayer, and even there the multitudes came to him from every direction.

IV. Jesus Returns to Capernaum and Continues His Work of Healing, Winning and Teaching

1. Jesus provokes the criticism of the Scribes and Pharisees by forgiving the sins of a paralytic and healing his body also, Mark 2:1-12; Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26.

When Jesus returns to Capernaum, after his first preaching tour in Galilee, the scribes and Pharisees

from Jerusalem are present to see, to hear and to criticize. They constitute a counter current to the great tide of popularity which was coming upon Jesus from an ever-widening territory. Soon after Christ's arrival there were gathered together, at the house where Jesus spoke and healed, a large representation of Pharisees and doctors of the law from the villages of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem. God's healing power was manifested to an unusual degree, thus affording to open minds convincing proof of the Messiahship of Jesus.

The multitude overflowed the court square of the house, crowded the space even beyond the door, and Jesus spoke the word unto them. But the services are soon interrupted by an extraordinary incident. Some friends had reported the work of Jesus to a paralytic, who consented to be brought to him for healing. Lying helpless on his couch, four friends carried him to Jesus. The throng is so great and compact, each man tenaciously holding his place, that it is impossible to enter even the door of the house where Jesus is preaching. But faith and zeal are not easily discouraged. By an external stairway the friends take the paralytic to the top of the house and, removing the tiling of the roof, make an opening through which they lower him, with cords, right down in front of Jesus. Naturally, astonishment seizes the eager, listening throng. Appreciating the man's feeling of discouragement in the midst of the critical atmosphere, and knowing the supreme need and desire of his soul, Jesus stops addressing the audience, whose attention was already diverted from

his message to the paralytic, and speaks directly to him the tender, comforting words: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." Instead of rejoicing at the good news, the leaders of religion (scribes and Pharisees) entertain thoughts they dare not express—thoughts that Jesus is a blasphemer because he speaks the word of forgiveness, a prerogative of God only. Their fundamental proposition was right, but their estimate of Jesus was wrong, for he was God manifest in the flesh and, therefore, could speak words which God alone could rightfully utter. Knowing what is in man, Jesus reads their very thoughts and asks a question they never answer: "Why think ye evil in your hearts?" Then, in adaptation to their dullness of perception and obduracy of heart, he commands the paralytic to rise, take up his bed and walk. The miracle, performed in public at Christ's demand, would be an ocular demonstration that the Son of man had also authority upon earth to forgive sins. Christ was Master of body and spirit; he could heal the disease of the body and forgive sins of the soul because he is the Son of man and the Son of God.

Promptly the paralytic, feeling the healing power of Jesus, arose, took up the mattress whereon he lay and walked out through an opening in the crowd to his own home, whence not long before he was borne by four friends into the presence of Jesus. His joy, and the joy of his four friends and relatives, was equalled only by the astonishment that took hold of the people and the reverential awe that filled their hearts as they heard the healing and forgiving words of Jesus and saw the

paralytic perfectly well and active and happy in his new-found blessings.

2. Jesus calls Matthew to be his follower and attends a reception given by the new disciple, Mark 2:13-17; Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32.

Going from the house where the paralytic was forgiven and healed, to teach by the seaside, Jesus passed by a place where taxes were paid. There he saw Matthew at his place of business and spoke two words with such winsome authority that the seasoned business man, despised by his own people, surrendered his occupation and life to Jesus. The potent words, the memorable telegram of Christ's heart, were, " Follow me." And immediately Matthew forsook all, rose up and followed Jesus. He soon became one of the twelve and later the author of the Gospel that bears his name.

Perhaps Matthew, who is also called Levi, had seen and heard Jesus before this occasion, and if so he was in a general sense Christ's disciple and therefore prepared to understand and act upon Christ's invitation without delay.

Matthew was a whole-hearted disciple. Some time after his call to permanent discipleship he made a " great feast " in honour of Jesus—a feast worthy of his position as an influential citizen and a somewhat adequate expression of his appreciation of Jesus. Besides Jesus and his disciples, Matthew invited many of his old associates in the business world. The guests consisted of publicans and sinners, who together constituted a despicable class. Matthew, however, threw the doors wide open, wishing to have a representative

gathering, consequently the Pharisees and scribes felt free to attend and just as free to criticize when they came. They directed their criticism to the disciples, but spoke loud enough for Jesus to hear. They said, with a cynical tone and an air of superiority, " Why do ye (you and your Master) eat and drink with publicans and sinners? " Of course the critics would not descend that low socially, but they would attend and look at what was going on and condemn with utmost liberty whatever they disliked. Jesus does not wait for his embarrassed disciples to reply, but comes at once to their relief and hurls three demolishing missiles at the heartless critics, " I, like a physician, go where I am needed, not to visit the well but to help the sick. I came to render a real service of mercy and kindness and not merely to observe a ritual even of sacrificial offerings. The scriptures which you profess to teach, but whose meaning you do not seem to know, tell us that a heart of kindness and a helping hand are far more acceptable to God than external observances and sacrifices."

The mirror that Christ thus holds up before them reflects their uncomely lives, and they become as silent as the grave. Jesus concludes the incident by saying, " I am now but carrying out my mission, which is to call not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

3. Jesus expounds the true doctrine of fasting and feasting, Mark 2:18-22; Matthew 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39.

At Matthew's feast, which seemingly was held on

one of the Jewish fast days (Mark 2:18), we have a peculiar combination of critics. The disciples of John the Baptist, who is now in prison, and the disciples of the Pharisees, now opposing Jesus at every step, unite in a question which has the odour of criticism, "We fast and pray, and thy disciples eat and drink; why is this?" Their question contains a reflection on the religious habits and spirituality of the disciples of Jesus. To this question Jesus gives a threefold, illustrative reply, showing that fasting is not a fixed ritual but must spring out of the necessity of the occasion.

In the first place, it would be inappropriate for the guests at a wedding to mourn and fast while the bridegroom is alive and well and everything is moving along with joyful ease. "Even so," says Jesus, "while I am with my disciples they are to be of a happy heart and bright countenance. Only when the festivities of marriage are interrupted by the death of the bridegroom would it be appropriate to turn feasting into fasting and rejoicing into mourning. Even so, while I, the bridegroom, am with my disciples, they do well to rejoice, but when I am taken from them they will feel like mourning and fasting. There is a time for everything, and let everything be done in its season; fast when it is appropriate and demanded by the occasion, and not otherwise."

In the second place, Jesus practically says in reply, "You exercise judgment and have a sense of propriety even in mending garments, but act otherwise in religious matters. If a rent be made in an old, fully

shrunk garment, it is not patched with a piece of new, undressed and unshrunk cloth, for, in that event, the rent would be enlarged by the shrinkage of the unfulled piece; but men adapt the new piece to the old garment. Even so, you should not thoughtlessly combine the practices of the old dispensation and the new dispensation—the Mosaic and the Messianic. Be as wise in practising your religion as you are in mending your garments.

In the third place, Jesus replies, "You also know how to preserve wine in the bottles made out of skin stripped off whole from kids and goats. At first these skin-bottles are somewhat elastic and will yield to the expanding of new wine as it ferments, and thus both wine and bottles are preserved. But if new wine be put in bottles that are old, hard and brittle, when it ferments the bottles will break and the wine run out and both be lost. Consider, therefore, the wisdom of adaptation in your religious life which must have appropriate methods of expression. The spirit of Christianity is not to be put in the mould of Levitical rites; the new wine of the kingdom must have a receptacle of its own; the Christian life must have its own method of expression. The old dispensation and the new are different in spirit, and, therefore, different in form; Christianity is not modelled after Judaism, but is both a development from Judaism and a special revelation; the new wine of Christ's life must be put in the new bottles (forms) of the Christian dispensation and not confined to the old bottles of the Mosaic dispensation."

V. Jesus Heals a Lame Man on the Sabbath in Jerusalem and Precipitates the Great Sabbath Controversy

1. The scene of the first stage of the great Sabbath controversy was in Jerusalem, John 5:1-47.

The occasion of this epoch-making miracle is worthy of consideration. There was a feast of the Jews—most likely the Passover (John 5:1)—at Jerusalem, and Jesus left his great work in Galilee in order to attend. On the Sabbath Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda (still shown to visitors), where many afflicted people gathered in order to be healed, if, perchance, they were fortunate enough to get into the water at the proper time. Jesus' attention was attracted at once to a man who had been a helpless cripple for thirty-eight years. "Do you wish to be made whole?" asked Jesus. "Yes, above everything else," said the man, "but I am unable to move, and I have no helper. I can only watch others step in and be healed while I remain unhealed, hoping against hope." As in the case of the paralytic in Capernaum, Jesus says, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," and straightway the man was made whole and obeyed. At once the Jews, instead of rejoicing in the cripple's cure, condemn him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day. He replies by saying, "The man who healed me told me to take up my bed and walk." They sharply reply, "Who told you to violate the Sabbath in this way?" This dramatic scene drew a large crowd, and the man was unable to identify Jesus, who had passed on, perhaps to the temple where they soon meet again, and to him

Jesus says, " Thou art made whole. Sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee." The man then thoughtlessly, and perhaps to turn the censure of violating the Sabbath from himself to Jesus, gives to the critics the name of his benefactor.

The attention of the Jews now centres on Jesus, the healed man being only an incident. Jesus and the fact of his healing on the Sabbath day are the vital points for present and future consideration. They, therefore, begin to persecute Jesus, not for healing the man but for healing him on the Sabbath; for violating their traditional rules as to Sabbath observance. Jesus makes the illuminating yet piercing reply to their criticism, " My Father worketh hitherto and I work." This statement but intensified their hatred and spurred them on to more determined efforts to kill him. They consider Jesus a Sabbath-breaker because he heals the man on the Sabbath day, and they call him a blasphemer because he calls God his Father, thus making himself equal with God.

In his reply Jesus describes himself as the Son, subordinate in his relation to the Father, but identical in nature, work and worth. He is subordinate in *relation* because he is the Son, " And the Son of man to whom is given authority to execute judgment; he is identical in *nature* because he is the Son of God; identical in *work* because he has power to raise the dead; identical in *worth* because men ought to honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

Jesus introduces *four witnesses,* more than the legal number, to prove who he is. Waiving his own claims,

Jesus brings forward John the Baptist, in whose light they rejoiced for a season; the works of Jesus himself; the Father who sent him, and the Scriptures which they searched, or ought to search, even Moses, on whom they set their hope. But not believing what Moses said about Christ, they could not and would not believe the words of Jesus himself. With this rebuke Jesus leaves the Jews, blinded by hatred and plotting his death, and turns his face toward his great and growing work in Galilee.

But Jesus is not permitted to return to Galilee unhindered. The leaders in Jerusalem follow him, not as disciples eager to learn, but as persecutors, determined to kill. They must, however, accomplish their murderous design decently and in order; hence, they dog his steps, watch his words, gather all possible evidence against him, and try to stem the tide of popularity in Galilee, create public sentiment in their favour and seek in every way to antagonize his ministry.

2. The scene of the second stage of the great Sabbath controversy changes from Jerusalem to a grain field through which Jesus and his disciples passed on their way back to Galilee, Mark 2:23-28; Matthew 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5.

It was the Sabbath, and Jesus and his disciples walked through a grain field, and, being hungry, the disciples plucked some ears of grain, rubbing them in their hands to get rid of the husks. This they had a right to do according to the Mosaic law, but not according to Pharisaic tradition, which considered their action a double work—the plucking was reaping and

the rubbing was thrashing. Thus Jewish tradition overlooked the need of the hungry.

The Pharisees, with an evil eye and designing heart, had followed them from Jerusalem, and are, therefore, close at hand when they make their criticism in the wheat field. They appeal to Jesus to explain the conduct of his disciples. He gives an explanation of their actions which shows the Pharisees' ignorance of the real teaching of the Old Testament and the true meaning of the religion of the Messianic kingdom. Jesus defends the conduct of his disciples with five arguments founded upon fundamental principles which ought to be accepted by men everywhere.

Argument one: The principle of necessity.

In his first argument, Jesus takes an incident from Jewish history to show that what is ordinarily the principle of conduct may not be the one pursued in an emergency. With a delicate thrust he asked the Pharisees if they had not read what David did when he was hungry on the eventful occasion when he fled from Saul to Nob and induced Ahimelech, the high priest, to give him and his companions the loaves of shewbread intended exclusively for the priests. They would readily recall the fact that twelve loaves were placed on the table in the holy place every Sabbath, the old ones being removed, thus signifying the renewal of nourishment and calling to remembrance the sustenance by the manna in the wilderness. Jesus says to them, in effect, " If David, being hungry, could eat without censure the hallowed bread, my disciples are not to be condemned for satisfying their hunger by

plucking and eating grains of wheat on the hallowed day." The principle of necessity is superior to the observance of a ritual.

Argument two: The principle of service.

In his second argument Jesus draws an illustration from Jewish law. He makes a keen thrust at their ignorance in the very realm where they ought to know, "Have ye not read in the law how the priests in the temple are blameless when they offer on the Sabbath sacrifices and perform duties even more numerous and onerous than on other days?" This shows that all activities are not prohibited on the Sabbath day. In fact, the Sabbath is a day of more religious work, more energy is expended and more good accomplished than on any other day of the week. It depends upon the kind of work as to whether or not it should be done on the Sabbath day.

The temple and its services were more important than the observance of the requirements for keeping the Sabbath holy, and whatever is connected with Christ is greater than the things connected with the temple. The disciples are busy, like the priests, but in connection with something greater than the temple; their work for the kingdom in the new dispensation is more significant than the work of the priests of the temple in the old dispensation. The disciples were, therefore, by partaking of the grains of wheat on the Sabbath day, strengthened for worship and service as they constantly followed Christ.

Argument three: The principle of kindness.

Jesus takes his third argument from the Old Testa-

ment prophets. What he says, therefore, ought to be conclusive with the teachers of the Old Testament. As in the other two arguments, Jesus here reproaches the religious leaders with ignorance of the meaning of the Old Testament. They had missed the vital element in the teaching of the prophets who put kindness of heart and deed toward their fellow-men above any external rites and ceremonial requirements. If they only had a kind heart they would not have a caustic tongue. If they understood and practiced the teaching of the prophets, who emphasized spirituality rather than formality, human kindness rather than minute ritual, they would not have condemned the guiltless disciples.

Argument four: The principle of authority.

In his fourth argument in this memorable controversy, Jesus shows that the disciples are guiltless because they act in the presence of Jesus and with the approval of the Son of man, who is Lord of the Sabbath. Being Lord of the Sabbath, Christ has supreme authority over it and determines how it may be observed. He has the sovereign right to control and regulate it according to his own good pleasure. This was a high and holy claim which Jesus made for himself, and one which the Pharisees most vigorously rejected. To admit that Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath would be equivalent to admitting the Lordship of the Son of man, Jesus himself, over all human life and religious obligations. If Christ be the Lord of the Sabbath, it is proper and obligatory to observe it in his honour and according to his example and teaching

in person, or through his disciples who understand and express his will.

Argument five: The principle of philanthropy.

Furthermore, Jesus argues that the disciples are guiltless because they put the relief of human suffering above the observance of an iron-clad ritual. Jesus strikes the heart of the whole matter of the relation, importance and mission of days, sacrifices and ceremonies when he says, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath is for the good of man's body, mind and soul—good for the whole man. The law of the Sabbath is based upon the nature of man, who needs a Sabbath. One day in seven for rest and worship is a constitutional necessity, hence a divine provision. God made man and adapted the Sabbath to his needs. The Sabbath, therefore, is not an arbitrary appointment, but a human necessity and a divine mercy. One day in seven, not one in five, not one in ten, is the demand of human nature and the word of God.

Human good, therefore, is superior to Sabbath observance, which has as its supreme aim the highest benefit to man, relief of body, instruction of mind and inspiration of soul. The Sabbath is man's servant, not his master. It is to conserve his highest interests and not to crush his aspiring spirit. Man is more than a day; he was made in God's image and the Sabbath was set apart for his benefit; for whatever helps man honours God. True philanthropy, love of man, would subordinate things in the interest of persons. The Sabbath was made for the good of man and the glory of God.

3. The third stage of the Sabbath controversy takes place in Galilee and is characterized by increasing intensity, Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11.

The third act in this vital drama occurs in a synagogue in some unnamed city or town in Galilee. According to his custom, Jesus entered a convenient synagogue to teach and to preach, and, if need be, to heal. There was in the audience a man with a withered hand. Now the vigilant and persistent scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem were present, not to worship or to learn, but to worry and to condemn. We are not told what Jesus taught on this day, but are told what he did.

Observing the presence of the man with the withered hand, and knowing Jesus' power and willingness to heal, the scribes and Pharisees ask if it is permissible to heal on the Sabbath—that being a question of dispute among religious leaders. Simple methods of healing might be used where life was in danger, but what were probably not fatal diseases created an unsettled question. Many Rabbis considered healing of disease a form of work to be prohibited on the Sabbath.

The *principle of common sense* is the one to which Jesus appeals in his reply, "How do men act on the Sabbath in the ordinary affairs of life? If a man have a sheep to fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not, without any scruples of conscience, lay hold on it and lift it out?" Unquestionably so, because the sheep is of value both as an object of life and a piece of personal property. Therefore, a man may be

helped out of a serious condition on the Sabbath day without violating its sanctity, for a man is of more value than a sheep.

At this juncture Jesus requests the man to stand up so the audience can see his condition and have their sympathies aroused in his behalf and note the failure or success of his cure. The man promptly obeys, and Jesus asks the pointed question, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do harm, save life or to kill?" The critical Pharisees held their peace, not through ignorance but through chagrin, and their deepening hatred of Jesus. When Christ's gentle yet all-seeing eyes viewed the audience, and penetrated the depths of the scribes and Pharisees, he was angered, being grieved because of the hardening of their hearts under influences that ought to have made them tender and sympathetic. Addressing the man, he says, "Stretch forth thy hand," and as the man exercised his will to obey, Jesus applied the healing power and the withered hand instantly became well and strong like the other. Instead of rejoicing at the good deed, the Pharisees were filled with foolish rage and took counsel with their greatest political enemies, the devotees of the Herodian family, how they might put Jesus to death without weakening their own power over the people.

VI. Jesus Returns to the Sea of Galilee, Where He Teaches and Heals the Eager Multitudes, Mark 3:7-12; Matthew 12:15-21

On reaching his headquarters in Capernaum, after

attending the feast in Jerusalem where he aroused the Jewish leaders and precipitated the great Sabbath controversy, Jesus and his disciples withdrew to the Sea of Galilee. The withdrawal was through prudence, not through fear. Christ did not abandon his work, but only changed the scene of his labours. He will work on, wisely selecting the places of labour, until his hour comes.

1. The magnetism of Jesus.

Soon great multitudes come to him, at the Sea of Galilee, to be benefited by his healing and teaching. The people come in throngs from all directions and from distant places and cities—from Idumea, Jerusalem and Judea on the south, and Tyre and Sidon, largely heathen cities, on the northwest; from beyond Jordan with its Jewish and Gentile population on the east, and from various parts of Galilee, with its numerous cities.

As the hatred of the leaders deepens, the enthusiasm of the people heightens. Jesus healed many, and the more he healed the more there came to be healed, especially those with unclean spirits, the favourite sons of Satan's household of uncleanness who insisted on proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God. He, however, enjoins silence to prevent undue excitement in the gathering multitudes, whose presence had already aroused the wicked jealousy of the leaders, who feared the weakening of their influence over the masses through the growing popularity of Jesus.

2. The nature of the kingdom.

At this point Matthew, who wrote especially for the

Jews, draws a picture of the Old Testament Messiah which is a vivid contrast in all its features with the Messiah of the popular Jewish expectation. The Pharisees thought that the Messiah would have the following characteristics: political, delivering the chosen people from the Roman yoke; military, leading the victorious Jewish armies against the Roman eagles; Jewish, exalting the Jews of Palestine and of the dispersion to a glory surpassing that of Solomon; imperial, enthroning the Messiah himself, so that as David's son and successor his kingdom should extend over all the earth and its glory should endure as long as the sun. The sword and the earthquake, the thunder and noise of battle would be the symbols of his presence and power. The Pharisees and scribes read into the kingdom of God the ideas of world empires and world greatness and methods of conquest and sovereignty. Jesus, however, teaches that the Messiah is to conduct his campaign not with army and sword but with a band of believers and the truth; not with noisy demonstration but with quietness of spirit; that the kingdom should not be for the Jews alone, but that the Gentiles also should share in the coming victory, spiritual and universal. Christ, as the servant and the Son, should fulfil in his Messianic work the word spoken by Isaiah, the prophet (Matt. 12:18-21), "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he

not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

At this juncture, when the multitudes come to hear the truth and to be healed of their maladies, when the leaders conspire to put him to death, Jesus sees the necessity for a group of helpers both to counteract opposition to his work and person and to assist him in teaching and healing the ever-increasing throngs attending his ministry; hence he selects the twelve disciples, whom he names apostles, and thus begins a simple organization, but effective, for carrying on his work.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF ORGANIZATION—JESUS ENLARGING HIS ACTIVITIES

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CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF ORGANIZATION—CHRIST ENLARGING HIS ACTIVITIES

I. Christ Chooses the Twelve Apostles and Preaches the Sermon on the Mount

The ever-increasing multitudes that followed Jesus, the growing opposition of the scribes and Pharisees, and the approaching hour of destiny for him and the people combine to induce Christ to select a special group of men to assist him in his momentous task.

1. The choice of the twelve, Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16.

Much will depend upon the choice he makes. The selection must not be made impulsively or thoughtlessly, but deliberately and prayerfully. The crisis intensifies the praying of Jesus; hence, on the eve of selecting the twelve apostles to be his co-workers, he went up into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. In the early morning, with the breath of God and of the mountains upon him, he chose, out of the vast number of followers, twelve men to be with him in intimate association, and at his command, to go forth to preach and to heal.

The religious leaders of the day would naturally be expected to possess the qualifications which Christ would require in his apostles, but they sadly failed in

docility of spirit, humility of mind, simplicity of faith and spirituality of life. They lacked freedom of thought, openness of mind and the forward and upward look. They were burdened with traditionalism but violently struck the hand that tried to lift the load; their minds were imprisoned by the externals of a ritualistic religion, but they rebelled against the divine liberator who came to break the fetters.

Consequently, Jesus turned elsewhere to find his leaders—men free from the blight of formalism and religious pride and open to the new and redemptive forces he brought into the world; men from the common walks of life; men untainted and unbound by the false theologies of the schools; men willing to learn the fresh, heavenly truths taught in the school of Christ; men strong in body and vigorous in mind, docile in spirit and courageous in life; industrious men who were not afraid to undertake a mighty task for which they were willing unselfishly to live, and, if need be, heroically to die; men capable of responding to the spiritual and the colossal, to the need of man and the call of God. And such characteristics, in the main, did the apostles possess. They varied, however, in their capacities and aptitudes, but blended well in the crucible of experience and aggressive work under the touch of Christ.

2. The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, 7; Luke 6:17-49.

In the morning, immediately after selecting the twelve disciples, whom he called apostles, Jesus delivered to them and a vast multitude his matchless in-

augural address which is popularly known as the Sermon on the Mount. Both Matthew and Luke give a report of the sermon, each selecting the material best suited to his purpose. In the introductory part Luke gives four beatitudes and four woes, and Matthew presents nine beatitudes and treats the theme of Christ's discourse in a more logical and comprehensive manner, because he is writing especially for the Jews who thought the kingdom of heaven would immediately appear. We shall consider Matthew's fuller account of Christ's message on this occasion, recorded in chapters five, six and seven.

The occasion was the morning after a night spent in prayer and immediately following the selection of the twelve apostles whom Christ designated by name and called out of the multitude to come near him, in a special class or group, for definite instruction in the fundamental principles of the kingdom of heaven, of which they are to be ambassadors.

The place was a level spot on the mountain to which Jesus ascended after the selection of the twelve; a mountain not identified with certainty, but probably the Horns of Hattin, a few miles west of the Sea of Galilee.

The audience was the newly-selected apostles nearest to Jesus and a vast multitude standing, thickly massed, in hearing distance, on the mountain-side.

The preacher was Jesus of Nazareth who, by teaching and preaching and healing, had created a deep religious enthusiasm far and near, in country, village and city.

The subject—The Righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven which John proclaimed as being just at hand and which Jesus wished to clarify in the minds of the people. By *the kingdom of heaven* is meant the Messianic era or the reign of God through Christ in the hearts and lives of men. The entrance into that kingdom is effected on the human side by repentance and faith, on the divine side by the birth of the Spirit.

We have four aspects of the Messianic era which Matthew designates as the kingdom of heaven and which is called the kingdom of God by the other evangelists. First, *the character of its subjects* (5:1-16); second, *the perfection of its law* (5:17-48); third, *the spirituality of its duties* (6:1–7:12); fourth, *the solemnity of its appeal* (7:13-27).

First (5:1-16), the subjects of the kingdom of heaven are to be different from those of any worldly empire both in spirit and in mission. Each characteristic, or quality of character, is rewarded by a special blessing. The first word Jesus uttered must have awakened profound interest—"Blessed"—a stronger word than happy, implying joyous spirit and fortunate environment. The beatitudes have their human and divine side expressed in quality of character and the favour of God. For the humble (poor) there is honour; for the sorrowful, comfort; for the meek, riches; for the earnest, satisfaction; for the merciful, more mercy; for the pure, spiritual vision; for the peaceful, divine fellowship; for the faithful, heavenly reward. The subjects of the Messianic reign are not only to possess a character approved of God, but also to per-

form a beneficent, universal *mission*. They have a weighty moral responsibility both as the salt of the earth and as the light of the world, its preservers and illuminators.

Second (5:17-48), the law of the kingdom of heaven is superior to the law of the Old Testament and the added laws of the Jewish teachers. Christ came not to destroy the law or the prophets; not to nullify; not to reduce the requirements; but to fulfil—to carry out to completion all that was good in previous legislation and revelation. The righteousness required by the scribes and Pharisees was the climax of formality; that required by the kingdom of heaven was the perfection of spirituality. Even the religious leaders of the day were not fit subjects for the kingdom of heaven, which demanded a nobler living than their boasted self-righteousness possessed.

Christ drew a vivid contrast between his ethical teaching and that of the Rabbis, and showed the superiority of the righteousness demanded by subjects of the kingdom of heaven. His demands penetrated the inner life while theirs dealt with the outer life.

He illustrated his meaning by the law of murder, for they considered only the murderous act, he the murderous feelings and insulting words; by the law of chastity, they condemned only the act of impurity, he applied the law to the desires of the heart and the looks of the eyes; they granted divorce for many causes, having as a check a written document to that effect, he limited divorce to the one sin that by its nature violated the marriage relation; they took

numerous oaths, using many words, he prohibited swearing by anything sacred whatsoever, and limited assertions to the simplest forms, "yes" or "no;" they practised the law of revenge, doing unto others as they did unto them, he enjoined the law of kindness, doing unto others as we would have others do unto us; they taught love for friends and hatred for enemies; he enjoined love for all, like the heavenly Father, whose blessings are gracious and universal. Christ set as the highest ideal of human conception the character and deeds of God, and said, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The subjects of his kingdom are to progress toward the perfect character of the heavenly Father—their creator, preserver and ideal.

Third (6:1–7:12), the spirituality of the duties of the kingdom of heaven is emphasized and illustrated in contrast with the formalism, hypocrisy and self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Our duties to God are to be characterized by sincerity and unselfishness in all things, and specifically in regard to religious acts, as almsgiving, prayer and fasting, and by simplicity and whole-heartedness in our devotion to God, shown by putting his kingdom first; by laying up treasures in heaven with an eye single to his glory, with a heart devoid of covetousness and a soul trusting in God's goodness and rejecting worry concerning temporal matters as unnecessary, unavailing and unbecoming.

Duties to man are to be performed in a fraternal spirit devoid of self-censure and in the exercise of

wisdom that is both discriminating in its message and hearers and helpful in teaching and living. Duties to God and man are summarized in prayer and enjoined and illustrated in the golden rule, which can be practised only by men whose living is vitalized by communion with God and love for men.

Fourth (7:13-27), Christ concludes his sermon by a *solemn appeal* to be earnest in finding the right way, to be on guard against self-deception in the way, and with due consideration of the final test at the end of the way. He warns his followers against false teachers and false personal religion. He describes three types of religion: a religion of *words,* which is unavailing; a religion of *works,* which is lifeless, and urges them to practise a religion of *worth* which, like a house upon a solid foundation, can alone stand the test of the final day.

The effect of the sermon was profound. Not only the disciples but the multitude were astonished and amazed at the manner and spirit, originality and simplicity of his presentation of the vital things of the kingdom of heaven. He taught not as the Jewish Rabbis, dealing with quotations musty with age, but as one who had direct access to the treasures of truth and who spoke with the authority of personal knowledge and experience.

II. Christ Heals a Centurion's Servant at Capernaum, Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10

After preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus returned to Capernaum with his disciples. Now there

was in Capernaum a Roman centurion who had a highly esteemed servant grievously tormented, even at the point of death. The centurion was a man of generous spirit and great popularity even among the Jews. Wishing to secure the kindly offices of Jesus, he sent a committee of elders from one of the synagogues in Capernaum to urge Christ to come down and heal his servant. They made their plea on the ground of the centurion's liberal spirit and religious beneficence, for he had built a synagogue for the Jews in Capernaum.

Then Jesus started, with the committee of elders, to the house of the centurion who had sent his confession of unworthiness by other messengers, but subsequently went to meet Jesus in person, saying, "Lo, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed." The centurion illustrated his faith in a very striking way, saying to Jesus, "I understand your authority over disease is like my authority over men. As a military officer I have only to say to my subordinates, 'Come' or 'Go,' and my word is instantly obeyed. So you, Master, have but to speak the desired word and every disease will depart at your bidding."

The man's faith won the victory and the commendation of Jesus. The centurion showed a greater degree of faith than had been found in Israel, the people of special privileges. No nation has a monopoly on faith; none is an exclusive object of God's redemptive purpose, for, from all points of the compass—east, west, north and south—men of faith shall come and

enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven in the presence of patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and kindred spirits. Many, however, who had greater opportunities and were, by birth, children of the kingdom, will, through unbelief, be cast into outer darkness, away from the fellowship of God and the redeemed.

The incident closes with the significant and heartening statement, "As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee," and the servant was healed in that very hour.

III. Jesus Brings to Life a Widow's Son at Nain, Luke 7:11-17

A great multitude followed Jesus and his disciples, and as they drew near the gate of the city of Nain, now only a few people in humble huts, they met a large funeral procession. The deceased was a popular young man, the only son of his bereft mother. Jesus' heart was moved with compassion when he saw the mother weeping as only a widowed mother can weep for her only son. As master of life and death, he gently placed his hands upon the bier. The pall-bearers stopped and the whole procession stood in breathless silence. Then, into the dull, cold ears of death, he spoke to the young man, "I say unto thee, arise." Immediately life came back into the body, the young man sat up of his own accord and spoke words that brought solemn awe to all who heard and the strangest, deepest joy to his mother's heart. This was a memorable day in the history of Nain, of Palestine and of the world. With a word Jesus healed disease and conquered death. He

demonstrated the fact that he is indeed the resurrection and the life.

The impression made on the people by the raising of the widow's son spread far and wide, and Jesus was considered a great prophet and a token of God's gracious visitation.

IV. Jesus Answers a Message from John the Baptist and Commends the Forerunner, Matthew 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35

John the Baptist was still in prison at Machærus, east of the Dead Sea. His disciples had access to him in his loneliness. They perhaps reported the resurrection of the widow's son, and many other things that Jesus did and said, but John had no direct message from Jesus himself, no positive declaration that he was the Messianic King, destined to reign in the kingdom of heaven, which the forerunner had proclaimed to be at hand. Events were not turning out as John had anticipated. He has been deprived of the open country, to which he had been accustomed, and the opportunity of preaching to the multitudes, which was his supreme joy. He, therefore, naturally wished to understand the present religious situation. His supreme concern was the person and work of Jesus Christ. He, therefore, sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask a direct question. He wanted Christ's confirmation or denial of his Messiahship. His disciples are to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that cometh according to the Old Testament teaching, the expectation of the Jews and my own teaching, or must we look for another person

as the hope of Israel? Are you in reality the Messiah? Please say 'yes' or 'no;' I want my mind to be at rest. I will let your answer be final. Let me hear by the mouth of two of my faithful disciples." This was the substance of the message the disciples of John carried to Jesus.

When they arrived in his presence, Jesus, as usual, was exceedingly busy doing good. That very hour he performed many miracles of healing and casting out evil spirits. Jesus did not make reply in words, but answered by calling attention to his works of mercy and power and to the good news of the kingdom which is being proclaimed. He says, "Tell John the Baptist what you see and hear, and let him draw his own conclusion. The blind receive their sight; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me." This would be entirely satisfactory to John. He will certainly enjoy that beatitude; he will not stumble over Jesus as the Messiah, but will believe with all his heart.

Doubtless some in the audience had entertained a thought of adverse criticism. The incident might lead them, as it has led many since that day, to underestimate the character of the Baptist; hence Jesus, as the messengers departed, spoke to the multitude concerning his character. He appealed to their own knowledge of John, who was not a weak character, like a reed shaken with the wind, nor a delicate person, like those clothed with soft raiment and lingering in

the courts of kings. But he was a stalwart child of the desert, a fearless prophet of God and the capstone of the old dispensation and the foundation of the new spiritual structure. Among the sons of men no greater in character and position had been born, although in position those who enjoy the full blessings of the Messianic era are in that respect greater than he. He is the Elijah of the new dispensation.

Many heard John's message and were baptized—the masses and even publicans and sinners—but the scribes and Pharisees, religious rulers though they were, rejected the counsel of God which John preached and refused to be baptized, thus sealing their own doom in unbelief.

Jesus knew full well that the rulers and the people were divided in their opinion concerning both himself and John the Baptist. He, therefore, takes occasion to state that it is impossible for any type of individual to satisfy everybody. Some rejected John the Baptist because he was abstemious, neither eating nor drinking in a social way but, being of a recluse type, he would come forth to deliver his message and then retire from public view. Some say of him, "He has a demon; let him alone." On the other hand, the Son of man represented the opposite type of life and entered into the social joys and opportunities of his time and made his influence felt for the kingdom of heaven. They, therefore, repudiated him, saying, "He is a friend of publicans and sinners; let him alone."

Whatever one may do or say, some will criticize and reject. "Therefore," said Jesus, "be your own best

self, do your duty and remember that the final test is in the product of your life work, for wisdom is justified of all her children." Jesus' heart was almost crushed because men rejected his words and works and refused to repent of their sins. They were instructed, warned and entreated, but without avail.

V. Jesus Condemns Impenitent Cities and Invites the Weary to Come to Him for Rest, Matthew 11:20-30

The cities of greatest opportunity were centres of greatest impenitence, therefore of the severest punishment. "If," said Jesus, "the heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon had had the religious advantages of Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum, they would have speedily and genuinely repented. The cities of opportunity shall not be exalted unto heaven unless they repent and believe, but shall, through the pride of unbelief, have their downfall and be cast from the height of their arrogant impenitence to the shades and depths of Hades."

Why were not similar opportunities given to Tyre and Sidon if thereby they would have repented? This question leads us into the unfathomable depths of God's inscrutable providence and redemptive grace. The mind of Jesus turned quickly from the sad rejection and the awful doom of the impenitent cities to the simple believer to whom the Father reveals the Son in a blessed family relationship. With joyful gratitude Jesus thanks the Father for the infinite grace and wisdom which provide the greatest spiritual blessings for

the simple-hearted believer while rejecting the worldly wise in their self-sufficiency. There is joy in his heart and praise on his lips for the deep things of God, for his personal relations in the trinity and the believer's new knowledge and family ties in the household of God. The Father and Son have perfect knowledge of each other, and the Son alone can reveal the Father to those who, as children, accept the Gospel, and to whom the Son, in his sovereignty, reveals the glories of personal salvation.

But divine sovereignty does not prevent but rather inspires a gracious Gospel invitation. There is rest for the weary; knowledge for the ignorant; fellowship for the wayward. But each one must come, must personally accept the invitation. The weary and the heavy-laden are warmly invited to come to Jesus for relief and rest and are urged to enter his school and learn from him the most precious lessons of life, for the yoke of his school is easy and the burden of his regulations is light. As the meek and the lowly one, he will teach what men ought to know and give rest to their weary souls.

VI. Jesus Dines in the House of Simon, a Pharisee, and Commends a Sinful Woman Who Anoints His Feet, Luke 7:36-50

At some unnamed city in Galilee the anointing of Christ's feet by a sinful woman took place in the house of Simon, a Pharisee. Not often did Jesus have an opportunity to dine in the home of a Pharisee, but when such an invitation was extended, it was gladly

accepted. Whether in company with publicans and sinners or scribes and Pharisees, he was fully at ease and used the occasion for the spiritual good of guests and visitors. During this meal, though uninvited, a woman of notorious reputation exercised her privilege of entering the house, and, in great demonstration of humility and affection, stood behind Jesus, as he was reclining at the table, and washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, repeatedly kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment she had brought for the purpose. Courtesy prevented the host from speaking his mind, but his proud, critical nature gave way to censuring thoughts. He felt sure that Jesus did not know the woman's character and reputation, and hastily drew the inference that he could not, therefore, be a prophet of God. Jesus answered the unexpressed thoughts of Simon, and illustrated the joy and natural expression of forgiveness of a sinner by the parable of the two debtors. One owed five hundred pence and another fifty; both were freely forgiven. "Which," says Jesus, "will love his benefactor more?" Hesitantly Simon replied, "*I suppose,* to whom he forgave the most." Christ, with his eyes on the woman and words directed to Simon, rebukes his host and commends the woman, saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

VII. Jesus Makes His Second Tour of Galilee, Luke 8:1-3

Jesus entered upon his second great tour of Galilee accompanied by the twelve apostles and also a group

of women. The names of the apostles are recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, but we have the names of only a few of the women preserved. Note the following: Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (symbol of complete possession), and who henceforth is as wholly under Christ's influence as she had been under the sway of Satan; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's servant, and therefore a woman of some prominence and probably of considerable means; Susan, whose name is mentioned only here, and many others whose names are written in heaven and whose deeds relieved the physical necessities of Jesus. This group of faithful women constituted a sustenance committee for Jesus and his apostles during the exceedingly busy Galilean period. By their kindly ministrations Jesus and his apostles were relieved of daily manual labour for physical support, and could, therefore, devote all of their energies to the spiritual work of the kingdom without distraction. No wonder that when Jesus was reinforced by twelve stalwart men and a large group of faithful women, the work of the kingdom was enlarged and the opposition of the Pharisees increased.

VIII. Jesus Refutes the Blasphemous Accusation of Being in League with Beelzebub, Mark 3:19-30; Matthew 12:22-37

At this point we have a glimpse into one of the busiest days of the strenuous life of our Lord. In a house in Capernaum, or near-by in Galilee, Jesus refutes the charges that he is in league with Beelzebub; refuses

the sign demanded by the scribes and Pharisees; arouses the concern of his mother and brethren, who seek to take him home; leaves the house for the seaside, where he delivers his first great group of parables; stills the tempest while crossing the lake; heals a fierce demoniac on the eastern side and returns to Capernaum for the night.

Let us look more fully into the activities and experiences of this day of toil and care. The multitude crowded Jesus for blessing so that he did not have opportunity even to eat. The friends of Jesus became alarmed and tried by physical persuasion to induce him to lighten up on his work, indicating that his activities were beyond all reason and that he was showing a lack of mental balance, but he had a work to do and a time in which to do it. He received his orders from the Father, and would obey them whatever friends and relatives might say or do.

The healing of a blind and dumb demoniac was the occasion of a fierce attack and insane charge of the Jerusalem investigation committee of scribes and Pharisees. When the multitude asked, "Is not this the son of David?" the rulers became blind with rage and hatred, and, feeling that they must explain the wonderful miracle, they obtusely asserted, "He hath Beelzebub; by the prince of demons casteth he out demons." They were compelled to admit that Jesus actually cast out demons; that fact gave them trouble. He performed the miracle promptly, effectively, and without their consent. With a mighty stroke Jesus showed how irrational was their explanation. He prac-

tically says that a fundamental principle of human affairs is that a house or city or kingdom divided against itself will inevitably come to naught. If, therefore, Satan should cast demons out of men, he would be working against his own kingdom, which both his shrewdness and nature will never permit. "Then, too," said Jesus, "how do your children and disciples cast out demons? By Beelzebub? I refer you to them for their decision." What a keen thrust! What a demolishing argument!

Having answered their argument, both by reason and reference to the conduct of the sons of the Pharisees, Jesus gave the real explanation and pointed out the responsibility which that places upon religious leaders. "If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come upon you. You ought, therefore, to appreciate your opportunities and enter the kingdom and induce others to do likewise."

"Then, too," says Jesus, "casting out demons shows that one mightier than Satan is here; for a strong man, guarding his possessions, will abandon them only to one who is mightier than he, for Satan yields only when overpowered. Satan and I stand for opposite things. I am mightier than he because the Spirit of God is upon me; therefore, do I cast out demons."

"You are," says Jesus, "sinning against your day of opportunity and will reap the reward in a hardened conscience and eternal punishment." They were charged with blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, defaming the Holy Spirit and attributing to Satan what

the Holy Spirit alone could do. They were, therefore, so hardened and blinded that they confirmed their nature for eternity, where they would keep on sinning and, therefore, keep on being punished. Those who said of Jesus, "He hath an unclean spirit," were guilty of an eternal sin which, from the nature of the case, hath no forgiveness neither in this world nor in the world to come—that is, most emphatically, no forgiveness at all.

Truthfully and courageously Jesus called them a generation of vipers in view of the nature they displayed and the venom they injected. "Words," said Jesus, "are but fruits of the heart; hence every idle word man shall speak, he shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. And by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned."

IX. Jesus Refuses to Give a Sign to the Pharisees on Demand, Matthew 12:38-45

Some of the Pharisees would not go so far as to attribute casting out of demons to Satan rather than to the Holy Spirit, yet they refused to accept the miracles as conclusive proof of the Messiahship of Jesus. They, therefore, asked him to give a sign that would satisfy them as to his divine mission. Jesus showed clearly that what they needed was not another sign, but a greater willingness to accept the miracles already performed.

He referred them to the historic (not metaphorical) illustration of Jonah, who was swallowed by a "great

fish" (not our technical whale), and was, after three days, delivered safely upon dry land, and who preached so as to win the Ninevites to repentance. Even so, the Son of man, after spending three days and nights in the grave, shall come forth to live forevermore.

The men of Jonah's generation had not the spiritual light, and therefore not the moral responsibility of the men of Christ's day. Hence, the rejecters of the Gospel would be under greater condemnation in the final day than the inhabitants of Nineveh, the ancient heathen city; for superior knowledge always means weightier responsibility. A greater one than Jonah in their midst meant a greater responsibility upon their heads.

Similarly the Queen of the South, who came from afar in her eagerness to learn from the wisdom of Solomon, would be held to a less strict account in the final judgment than would the people to whom Jesus spoke, because Solomon, though the wisest of the ancients, was far inferior to the Son of man.

Furthermore, Jesus warned against mere negative character, and by implication suggested the fulness of an abundant life. Pursuing the thought of casting out demons, he said that man must be occupied by new and holier forces; that temporary reformation and good impulses are not sufficient; man must not only be dispossessed of evil spirits but must be possessed of the Holy Spirit; the mind must not only be emptied of sinful thoughts but be filled with holy ideals. The house from which the evil spirit was driven must not only be swept and garnished but entered and occupied.

Even so is the tabernacle in which our soul is dwelling. The slogan must be " Exit Satan; enter Christ."

The Jews cast off idolatry, after the Babylonian captivity, but did not welcome the spiritual message of John and Jesus. Even so the Pharisees did not commit gross sins, and swept and garnished their lives with an elaborate ritualism, but refused to fill them with the highest spiritual ideals and duties. Therefore, the evil spirit found them ready for a more complete occupancy, and entering with a full force of seven others more wicked than himself, he made them worse than ever before, leading them to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. They kept open house for Satan, and he was not slow to take possession.

X. Jesus Teaches Who His True Kindred Really Are, Mark 3:31-35; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21

Amid these trying experiences Jesus, while in a house speaking to a multitude, was visited by his mother and half-brothers. They drew near, but, owing to the crowd, did not enter the house in person, but sent word that they were on the outside and desired to speak with him. He showed supreme wisdom in the manner in which he utilized the interruption. Quick as a flash he asked them, " Who is my mother and who are my brethren? " They made no reply. Then Jesus cast his eyes on the multitude like a revolving camera and stretched forth his hands toward the disciples, saying, " Behold, my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven,

the same is my mother and sister and brother." Obedience to God establishes a relationship to Jesus as precious and intimate as all the ties of family life combined, mother *and* sister *and* brother.

XI. Jesus Delivers His First Great Group of Parables by the Seaside, Mark 4:1-34; Matthew 13:1-53; Luke 8:4-18

The services in the house having closed, Jesus went to the seaside. The multitude pressed upon him so that he entered a boat, always at his disposal, and addressed the multitude on the shore. It was on this occasion that he delivered his first series of parables. The Jews had no spiritual capacity to understand and no eyes to see and no ears to hear. They cultivated a growing enmity against Jesus. He, therefore, changed his method of teaching, using the parable in a masterly way.

The parable is a comparison or illustration drawn from nature or life, which conceals truth from the wilful rejecter but reveals it to the earnest seeker. Christ would hide the truth for a time from those who would not believe but were resolved to reject his message, and impress it upon those who earnestly sought to understand and obey. It may be of interest to note several reasons why Jesus taught in parables: first, to illustrate and enforce moral and religious truth; second, to preserve truth in simple, concrete form for easy remembrance and future reflection; third, to state truth so as not unnecessarily to excite hostility while securing assent to the principle involved; fourth, to

state truth so the earnest seeker might see it more clearly and be impressed by its force and beauty; fifth, to attract attention and stimulate inquiry leading to completer knowledge through spiritual interest; sixth, to obscure truth as a punishment for the wilfully blind and deaf and hard of heart; seventh, to put his message in a treasure-chest transparent to those who have eyes to see and opaque to those who, having eyes, see not.

There are three major groups of parables and many isolated ones reported in the Gospel records.

The first great group (Matthew 13) deals with the beginning and development of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew), and the kingdom of God (Luke); the second group (Luke 13–19) deals chiefly with individual experiences but also relates to the nature and progress of the kingdom; the third group was spoken near the close of his ministry and portrays national and individual life and destiny, and the consummation of the age. In general, the first group is social, the second individual and the third eschatological; but personal faith, duty and destiny are either implied or expressed in all three groups. Nine parables are reported as having been spoken on this busy day.

First, the parable of the sower. Evidently this parable was not intended to give instruction in agriculture but to illustrate religious truth. We have in it a simple description with no introduction and no application. There is, however, an appeal and a delicately veiled suggestion that the parable contains a valuable spiritual truth available for those, and only those, who are earnestly attentive. The picture is true to life. The

parable is a check to pessimism, for there is more good ground than other kinds of soil. It also is a restraint to unlimited optimism, for all the soil is not productive. The seed is the word of God, hence the soil is the human mind and heart. The seed by the wayside represents the superficial hearer; the seed on stony ground, the sentimental hearer; the seed on thorny ground, the worldly hearer; the seed on good ground, the obedient hearer. The four classes of hearers have been characterized as the heartless, the shallow-hearted, the half-hearted and the whole-hearted.

The word of God shall not return unto him void. Some of the ground brought forth thirty, some sixty and some an hundredfold. Herein teachers of the word may find great encouragement.

Second, the parable of the tares. This parable teaches both the goodness and severity of God; his patience in sparing the tares with the wheat, his justice in finally separating them from the wheat and committing them to the flames.

" The field is the world." In the face of this positive declaration of Jesus it is difficult to see why some interpreters insist that the field is the *church.* We are not to use violence to extirpate the wicked. We must not lift the hand of persecution nor endeavour to bring about the reign of righteousness by the destruction of the ungodly. " Vengeance is mine; I will repay," saith the Lord. Our mission is salvation, not destruction. The sowers are the Son of man and Satan. Here the good seed are not the word of God, as in the parable of the sower, but " the children of the kingdom," or true

believers; the tares represent error personified in the children of the wicked one; the harvest is at the end of this age, when Christ shall return to earth; the reapers are the angels under the authority of the Son of man; the destinies are the furnace of fire for the finally impenitent, and for the righteous the Father's kingdom, where they shall shine as stars forever and ever.

Third, the parable of the mustard seed. This parable suggests vitality and development; the extensiveness and expansiveness of the kingdom of heaven represented by the growth of a very small seed into a plant or tree large enough to accommodate the birds of the air. We are not to be discouraged in our religious activities, for great results come from small beginnings; the oak from the acorn, larger churches from small ones, and a great multitude from a few disciples.

Fourth, the parable of the leaven. In this parable we have a familiar domestic illustration in which, naturally, a *woman* would be the principal character. It suggests the intensive and permeating influence of the kingdom of heaven. The leaven, our yeast, penetrates the entire mass until the whole is influenced by it. The point of the illustration is in the quiet diffusiveness of the leaven or the method and extent of its operation; the unobtrusive, penetrating influence of the Gospel rather than the sudden and violent manner in which the Jews thought the Messiah would carry on his work. No community is ever the same after hearing the Gospel. This parable no more teaches that all men are to be saved than that all men are to be lost.

It rather teaches that wherever the kingdom of heaven is proclaimed, a mighty change will be wrought by its spiritual power.

Fifth, the parable of the seed growing by itself. This parable describes the spontaneity and unfolding processes of natural growth. The earth beareth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. When the harvest is ripe the grain is gathered. It illustrates how God works through spiritual laws until the day of harvest; the stages of spiritual development in the individual and the world until the end of the age. This parable spake Jesus unto the multitude by the sea, confining himself here for the first time to this method of teaching, adapting himself to the capacity of his hearers and fulfilling the Old Testament scriptures by revealing what had for ages been concealed.

From the seaside Jesus and his disciples went into Simon Peter's house in Capernaum, which was in all probability his temporary home. There he explained the parables to his disciples, thus adding private instruction to public preaching and giving them special, individual training. At their request he explained the parable of the tares and thus gave a hint as to the method of interpreting all parables.

Sixth, the parable of the hidden treasure. This is an illustration drawn from the financial world and from a practice even more common in the time of Christ than at present. It pictures the preciousness of the kingdom; the joyful surprise at the unexpected discovery of its blessings. When a man perceives the ad-

vantages of Christianity, he is willing to part with all he has to secure them. This fact is in harmony with Christ's doctrine of self-denial, "Unless a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Many a person has casually attended a service, and, to his own surprise and lasting gratitude, heard a sermon which instantly won his heart and life to Christ. He unexpectedly discovered and secured the hidden treasure.

Seventh, the parable of the pearl of great price. This parable illustrates the preciousness of the kingdom of heaven and the joy of successfully *seeking* its blessings. Of far greater value than pearl or diamond is the abundant life found by all who seek with their whole heart.

Eighth, the parable of the net. This parable represents in a graphic way so that an ordinary person can understand, the final separation, through angelic administration, of the good and the bad at the close of this age. The good fish were gathered into vessels and the bad were cast away. By suggestion and implication the righteous are to be brought into the kingdom of glory and the wicked cast into a furnace of fire.

Ninth, the parable of the householder. This parable describes the method and work of a scribe or teacher in the Messianic age. Jesus tells his disciples that they are to be like a competent householder who, while utilizing the old stock, keeps it replenished with new goods so he may draw on both supplies at pleasure. The wise Christian teacher must, therefore, conserve the old facts and welcome new truths if he would instruct and inspire his students.

XII. Jesus Crosses the Lake and Stills the Tempest, Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 8:18, 23-27; Luke 8:22-25

Late in the afternoon, with the multitudes still surging about him, Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat, " even as he was," weary and exhausted in body and soul. As soon as they launched the boat Jesus went to the stern and lay down on a cushion and soon fell fast asleep. Suddenly a storm arose, an event very common on the Sea of Galilee, owing to its shape and the contour of the country toward the north. The disciples were greatly alarmed, as the waves overflowed the boat, filling it with water. They rushed to Jesus and, in a tone of rebuke, said, " Master, dost thou not care for us? We are about to perish; come quickly and save us." Immediately Jesus rebuked the waves of the sea, and the fears of the disciples, and there was a great calm on the sea and in their hearts. There is a pathos in Christ's question to the disciples. He said, in substance, " Why are ye fearful as to the issue while I am with you? Is it possible that ye have not yet, after all you have seen me do, enough faith in me to know that I am equal to any emergency? " With a great and holy fear they marvelled at his easy mastery over wind and wave.

XIII. Jesus Heals a Demoniac on the Eastern Side of the Sea of Galilee, Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39

Upon reaching the eastern side of the lake there came from Gerasa (or Khersa), a village in the district

surrounding the City of Gadara, two demoniacs, one of them being exceedingly fierce. Unclad, unclean, untamable and unconquerable, ferocious and self-destructive, the demoniac rushed from his dismal abode among the tombs and, seeing Jesus from afar, began to cry aloud and, drawing near, fell at his feet, saying, "What have I to do with thee, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not." The evil spirit had a legion of similar beings associated with him in his destructive work and spoke for the whole number; but whether one or many, Jesus was more than conqueror. With a fiendish love for devastation and bodily existence they asked the privilege, when cast out of the man, to enter a herd of swine. At Christ's command the legion left the man and entered a herd of swine which violently ran down a precipice and perished in the sea; but the man, saved and clothed and in his right mind, took his position at the feet of Jesus in joyful gratitude. The owners of the swine besought Jesus to depart from them, and he, not wishing to remain where he was not appreciated, entered a boat and returned to the western side of the lake. The healed demoniac, in contrast with the selfish owners of the swine, besought Jesus that he might accompany him in his journeys. But Jesus had a different program for his life. He answered the man's prayer, but in the negative—"he suffered him not." However, he gave the healed demoniac a worthy task at home, which is often more difficult to discharge than it is to follow Jesus to the other side of the lake or to the other side of the wide, wide sea. At his own home,

among his friends and the whole district of Decapolis, ten cities where Jesus was not known, the healed man became an enthusiastic witness to the wonderful things Jesus had done for him and was capable of doing for others.

XIV. Jesus Returns to Galilee and Raises the Daughter of Jairus and Heals the Woman Who Touched the Hem of His Garment, Mark 5:21-43; Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56

When Jesus reached Capernaum, perhaps the next morning, the multitude welcomed him in sharp contrast with the demand of the Gadarenes to depart from their land. While speaking to the crowds Jesus was interrupted by the appeal of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who fell at his feet and besought him most earnestly to come and heal his only little daughter, twelve years old. "Come quickly," said Jairus, "for my daughter was at the point of death when I left home and is dead by now; but whether sick or dead, by the touch of thy hand she shall live." Jesus and his disciples followed Jairus, the multitude surging around. As they went a timid woman, sorely afflicted with a hemorrhage for twelve years, quietly touched the hem of his garment and, virtue going out of him, she was instantly healed. A kindly look and a pointed question, "Who touched me?" brought the woman trembling to his feet in a full confession of her act of faith. Then Jesus tenderly said, "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Just then a messenger rushed up and said to Jairus, "Too late, thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." Instantly Jesus spoke a word of hope, "Fear not, only believe and she shall be made whole." He who raised the son of the widow of Nain could bring to life the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. On reaching the house Jesus stopped the tumult from the multitude and the noise from the hired flute-players, so common at oriental funerals, and using his favourite euphemism for death, he said, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Then they laughed scornfully at him, knowing full well that she was literally dead and disbelieving in the resurrection power of Jesus. Jesus desired only sympathetic spirits in the solemn chamber where life will soon conquer death, so he took three disciples who understood him best—Peter, James and John—and the father and mother into the room where the lifeless body of the little daughter was lying. Taking the child by the hand, he said, "Maiden, arise," and, as Luke, the physician, expresses it, "Her spirit returned and she rose up immediately and walked." She partook of food, the people wondered, and Jesus enjoined silence to prevent undue excitement.

XV. Jesus Heals Two Blind Men and a Dumb Demoniac, Matthew 9:27-34

Another instance of wayside blessing soon took place. As Jesus passed on from the house of Jairus, two blind men cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, thou Son of David." They even followed Jesus into

the house, where they confessed their faith in his ability to heal. Then Jesus touched their eyes and rewarded their faith. He enjoined perfect silence, but they, like others, had zeal without knowledge and spread abroad his power and grace.

As Jesus and his disciples continue their journey, the friends bring to him a dumb demoniac. The demon was cast out, the dumb man spake, the multitudes marvelled and the Pharisees again accused Jesus of being in league with the prince of demons.

XVI. Jesus Gives Nazareth a Second and Final Chance to Accept Him as the Messiah, Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 13:54-58

Jesus now gives Nazareth the second and last opportunity to accept him as the Messiah. Nazareth and the surrounding country are called his own country because they are identified with the first thirty years of his life. He went to Nazareth and, as usual, during his second tour, was accompanied by his disciples. As on the first visit, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and taught. A large audience heard him and were astonished to think that the one whom they had known all their life should speak with such wisdom and power. He was known as the carpenter's son, or as *the carpenter,* after the death of Joseph. The people readily called his mother and brothers by name, Mary, James, Joses, Judas and Simon, and stated that his sisters are all still alive. Their rank unbelief prevented Christ from performing any considerable number of mighty works in their midst. He healed only a

few sick folks by his touch. While they marvelled because of his wisdom and works, he marvelled because of their unbelief and ignorance. What a keen sorrow he must have felt when he said, "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country (where he is generally known) and among his own kin (near relatives) and own house (brothers and sisters)."

XVII. Jesus Makes a Third Tour of Galilee and Commissions the Twelve, Sending Them Out to Preach in Groups of Two, Mark 6:6-13; Matthew 9:35–11:1

During the period of initiation and Christ's first tour of Galilee, he selected, one by one, at least six of the disciples, and on the second tour he chose the full twelve to be with him in close fellowship. They followed him and learned from Christ's example what to say and do. Before the third tour was completed, he divided the twelve into six groups of two each and sent them forth to work independently and to report to him for further instructions.

When Jesus saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion, because they were like harassed and shepherdless sheep and a great field of over-ripe wheat ready to perish, and few to reap the harvest. In these circumstances of need and opportunity he asks his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust out with a holy urge labourers into his harvest, and to help God to answer their prayers by volunteering their own unselfish services. Thus the twelve disciples were to

become apostles; having been taught, they were sent forth to teach. They were to practise what they had learned; translate knowledge into action. Instead of being mere followers and associates they were now to be leaders and pioneers.

Christ made three calls to his disciples. First, he called them to faith, or personal attachment, as on the east of the Jordan when six heard and heeded. Second, he called to fellowship, as during the second and part of the third great tours of Galilee; a call for association, observation, instruction and inspiration. Third, he called them to personal service when they were to go out, without his bodily presence, and do the work that he had done and commanded them to do.

At this time Jesus gave the apostles a commission. When he chose the twelve he delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Their names are given by Mark and Luke at the time they were chosen, but by Matthew when they were sent out on an independent mission, months afterward. The charge he gave to them includes several important items.

First, the comprehensiveness of their mission. Their field was to be Jews (not Gentiles and Samaritans) for the present, because he desired them to evangelize Galilee. Their message was, " The kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were to heal the sick, cast out demons to authenticate their mission, and to arouse interest in their message by their miracles. They were to receive their support from those to whom they ministered. Their conduct was to be respectful and considerate of others. They were to go to one place in a

community for comfort and efficiency, and when rejected were not to give up their tasks but merely to change their location and shake off the dust from their feet, not in anger, but as a sign that they were free from further obligation and responsibility, and the sin of the people rested upon their own head.

Second, devotion to their task is urged in the midst of a hostile environment. They are like sheep among wolves, and consequently are to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. They were to study their message and not spend their time in preparing a speech of self-defense to be delivered when they were arraigned in the synagogue or council. "Be not anxious how or what ye shall speak," refers to personal defense, not to the preparation of their message. They were to be wholly absorbed in the greater task of life and rely upon the Spirit to help them in the trying hour.

Third, faithfulness to their message. The disciples had seen how their Master had been persecuted. They were to remember that the disciple is not above his Master. Courageously and faithfully they were to proclaim what Jesus had taught in private. They were to be tongues for Christ and to bear in mind that the Father cares for his children. Loyalty to the Master was to be supreme, because he is more to them than father and mother. They are, therefore, to take up their cross and follow him, whatever the cost. They were cheered by the consideration that the smallest kindness shown to Christ's followers would not be forgotten. Even those giving a cup of cold water to a disciple of Jesus shall be rewarded.

XVIII. Jesus Comforts the Disciples of John Over the Death of the Baptist, Mark 6:14-29; Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9

Herod Antipas, who put John the Baptist to death, heard of the works of Jesus now augmented by the progressive activities of the apostles. Various interpretations were given of the present work of Christ. Some said John the Baptist had risen from the dead; others said that Elijah had reappeared on earth; still others that one of the old prophets had risen from the dead. Herod, however, said, "He is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead." But, wavering and troubled in conscience, he desired to see Jesus. At this point the evangelists narrate the events connected with the death of John, though they took place much earlier. Josephus gives a political reason for putting John the Baptist to death. He says that Herod feared an uprising through John's influence. The real reason, however, was John's courage in rebuking Herod for his adulterous relations with the wife of his half-brother, Philip, a man in private station. At a great celebration, either of his birth or coronation, many high officials were present. Herod was perplexed when he heard of the miracles performed by Jesus, and his guilty conscience was aroused as he remembered his relations with the Baptist. He heard John many times and trembled at his messages. He even heard him gladly, for there is a peculiar relief and joy in hearing a man bold enough to tell the truth, even though it pierces to the quick. Some wicked men often hear preachers and even

weep at their messages while refusing to repent and believe.

At the feast, amid the drunken revelling, Herodias, a young fascinating woman, danced alone, and by a lewd suggestiveness of person and manner made a lustful appeal to the royal rulers. In sensual glee Herod promised to give her whatsoever she asked, even to the half of his kingdom. It was a thoughtless promise of swelling words confirmed with an oath. A moment's conference with her mother, and the head of John the Baptist was demanded as a "gift" from the king. Now the pendulum swung from sensuous hilarity to poignant memory of his own wicked rashness. Though not morally obligated to keep his promise, yet the fetters of his oaths and the opinions of his guests bound him as a moral coward in the prison of his sins. The inexorable demand was just the head of a lonely, imprisoned preacher—a brain that once throbbed with God's thoughts and a tongue that pierced the gilded wickedness of kings. An executioner went that tragic night and severed the head of John from his body and brought the gory gift to the damsel. Then she and her mother reveled with a fiendish delight felt only by the children of vengeance and heirs of perdition. When John's disciples heard of his martyrdom, they promptly and sorrowfully took his body from the dungeon and tenderly placed it in a tomb and went at once to Jesus with their sad news and burden of grief, and he understood and comforted.

CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF ISOLATION—JESUS DEVOTING HIMSELF TO THE TWELVE

I. Jesus Withdraws from the Hostile Multitudes and, During a Series of Retirements, Devotes Himself to His Disciples

II. Jesus Retires Across the Lake, but is Followed by the Multitudes, Whom He Miraculously Feeds by Multiplying the Loaves and Fishes
   1. Jesus shows self-forgetful compassion for the needy crowds
   2. Jesus uses the occasion to develop the faith of his disciples
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III. Jesus Rejects the Insistent Offer to Become King of the Jews

IV. Jesus Appears to His Disciples in the Darkness of Night, Stills the Storm at Sea, and Continues His Beneficent Work

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   1. The wondering but unbelieving multitude demands a sign of Jesus
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VI. Jesus Clashes with the Pharisaic Committee from Jerusalem on the Question of Tradition
   1. Jesus clashes with the Pharisees on the question of ceremonial cleansing
   2. Jesus insists on the superiority of the spiritual over the ceremonial
   3. Jesus rebukes his disciples for their dulness

VII. Jesus Retires to the Region of Tyre and Sidon and Heals the Daughter of a Syro-Phœnician Woman

VIII. Jesus Retires to Decapolis, Where He Miraculously Feeds the Four Thousand
   1. The route followed

2. Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man
3. Jesus feeds the four thousand

IX. Jesus Rejects the Combined Demand of Pharisees and Sadducees for a Sign from Heaven
1. The Pharisees and Sadducees are refused a sign from heaven
2. Jesus warns his disciples against the leaven of Pharisaic and Sadducean teaching
3. Jesus heals a blind man

X. Jesus Retires to the Region of Cæsarea Philippi, Where He Tests the Faith of the Twelve in His Messiahship
1. Circumstances and significance of the occasion
2. The disciples report current opinions concerning Jesus
3. Peter expresses the belief of the disciples and is blessed of Jesus
4. An interpretation of Jesus' response to Peter
   a. The meaning of "this rock"
   b. The nature of "the church"
   c. Peter's conception of a church in his First Epistle
   d. "The Gates of Hades"
   e. "The Keys of the Kingdom" and authority to "bind" and "loose"
5. Jesus enjoins silence upon his disciples
6. Jesus enters upon a new phase of teaching his disciples and discourses on his death
7. Peter's worldly-wise suggestion draws forth Jesus' severe rebuke
8. Jesus lays upon his disciples the necessity of self-denying sacrifice
9. Jesus utters a solemn warning in view of coming judgment

XI. Jesus is Transfigured on a Mountain and Heals a Demoniac Boy at the Foot of the Mountain
1. Jesus retires to the heights of Mt. Hermon with Peter, James and John for a season of prayer
2. The Transfiguration occurs
3. Jesus talks with Moses and Elijah of his coming "exodus"
4. The effect of the scene on the three disciples and the foolish suggestion of Peter
5. Some lessons of the Transfiguration
6. The effect of the experience on Jesus
7. The conversation as Jesus and the disciples descend
8. The scene at the foot of the mountain: a demoniac cured
   a. Contrasted with the scene on the mountain-top
   b. The demoniac healed

c. Jesus privately rebukes the disciples for their lack of faith and prayer
d. Combination of the two scenes both artistic and scriptural

XII. Jesus Returns Privately Through Galilee to Capernaum and Pays the Half Shekel for the Temple Tax
1. Jesus speaks again of his crucifixion and resurrection
2. Jesus remains at Capernaum
3. Jesus pays his temple tax

XIII. Jesus Teaches that the Subjects of His Kingdom Must be Childlike in Disposition

XIV. Jesus Rebukes the Mistaken Zeal of John, Who Shows Loyalty and Narrowness
1. Jesus rebukes John's narrowness
2. Jesus teaches John by a series of concrete parables

XV. Jesus Illustrates the Spirit of Forgiveness by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant
1. The problem of forgiving a sinning brother is dealt with
2. The right of "binding" and "loosing" is asserted of the church
3. Jesus encourages group prayer
4. Jesus instructs Peter in the principle of forgiveness

XVI. Jesus Emphasizes the Doctrine of Absolute Self-Denial Enjoined upon His Followers
1. Jesus repulses a rash would-be disciple
2. Two examples of failure to meet the terms of discipleship are witnessed in:
a. One who would not put Christ's cause first;
b. A dilatory volunteer

CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF ISOLATION—JESUS DEVOTING HIMSELF TO THE TWELVE

The great Galilean campaign has come to an end. The tides have been rising high—the tide of public favour and the tide of Pharisaic opposition. The complex situation induces Jesus to change his method of operation. Instead of touring populous Galilee, with the assistance of the twelve, he decides to withdraw from the multitudes and devote himself to the instruction of his apostles. With Capernaum as centre, he makes four separate withdrawals from Galilee, leaving Herod's territory and going to the mountain section.

I. Christ Withdraws from the Hostile Multitudes and, During a Series of Retirements, Devotes Himself to His Disciples

There are at least seven reasons for Christ's withdrawals from Galilee at this particular time. Two of these reasons relate primarily to his first withdrawal and the other five to the entire series of withdrawals. First, the *jealousy* of Herod Antipas aroused by the multiplied activities of Jesus and the twelve apostles on their recent tour of Galilee. Herod, knowing the volatile nature of the Jews and their wonderful power, feared an insurrection and revolution that would make

Jesus king and endanger his own political security. Second, the *fanaticism* of the people evinced by their violent efforts to force Jesus to become their king. Third, the *hostility* of the Jewish leaders, which had been growing in intensity and power until it reached almost a tragic degree of hatred. Fourth, *the heat of the summer* in the lowlands, making it expedient for Jesus to withdraw to the lake and to the mountains during the hot summer months if he and his disciples would be in the best physical and mental condition for their work. Fifth, *the need of the disciples* for intellectual instruction and spiritual encouragement. During the six months of quiet withdrawals, Jesus and his disciples would, for the most time, be alone. He could expound to them the doctrines of the kingdom and reveal himself to them as they were able to appreciate his character and work. Sixth, *the twelve apostles' return* from their first independent missionary tour and report to Jesus of what they had done and taught. A season of quietude would be beneficial to them, because Jesus, on hearing their reports, could make suggestions as to their future activities, pointing out, if need be, their imperfections and encouraging them in their labours. Seventh, *the news of the death of John the Baptist*, bringing a poignant grief to the heart of Christ and casting a pall of sadness over the apostolic group. John's disciples brought the distressing news of the martyrdom of their master, and Jesus and his disciples had no heart to work until they spent at least a brief season of quietude in grateful thought of John's loyalty, and prayer for personal comfort and the blessing

of God upon the faithful labours of the martyred forerunner. Such was the situation when Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye apart into a desert place and rest a while." They had wrought so hard they needed recreation. Thereby lost energies would be replenished and they would be strengthened for future tasks.

II. Jesus Retires Across the Lake, But is Followed by the Multitudes, Whom He Miraculously Feeds by Multiplying the Loaves and Fishes, Mark 6:30-44; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13

The feeding of the five thousand was the chief event during the first retirement. Jesus and his disciples went, by boat, across the Sea of Galilee to Bethsaida Julius and ascended into a mountain for quietude and devotion. The multitudes were soon aware of his retreat and came to be blessed and went away satisfied. His duties pressed so heavily upon him that he had no leisure even so much as to eat, and yet instead of rejecting the multitudes, out of consideration for his own condition, he gladly welcomed them and spake to them concerning the kingdom of God and healed all that were sick. Though he and his disciples needed quiet for rest and comfort, Christ's weariness was outweighed by his compassion for the ignorant and the afflicted. The day was filled with teaching and healing, and toward the shadows of evening Jesus and also his disciples became interested in the physical welfare of the multitude. The disciples went so far as to suggest

that the multitude be sent away to secure food and lodging for the night.

Jesus utilized the situation to develop the faith of his disciples. He, therefore, asked Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread that the multitude may eat?" This he said to test the slow calculating disciple who, with a mathematical turn of mind, replied, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient to give everyone even a little to eat, much less enough to satisfy his hunger." Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, ever watchful of details, remarked, "There is a lad here which has five barley loaves and two fishes, but what are these among so many?" The fact that he suggests what the lad has implies some degree of faith in the possibility of a miracle. Jesus now prepares to satisfy the multitude, using as a meagre base of supply the loaves and fishes gladly furnished by the lad.

The place where the simple repast was served surpassed in beauty the banqueting halls of kings. The green grass of the springtime was the carpet; the glories of the setting sun, reflected by the mountains, the gorgeous tapestry; the host was the Son of man; the waiters, the apostles; the viands, the barley cakes and fishes; the guests, the weary multitudes from country, village and city.

When Jesus saw the multitude he was moved with compassion and made provision for their relief and comfort. We may note the progress of the miracle as follows: vision, Christ lifted up his eyes and saw the multitudes, their number and their need; compassion, Jesus' heart was tenderly touched by the condition of

the crowds that followed him; provision, Christ's compassion takes a practical turn and he seeks to relieve the suffering of the multitude; organization, Jesus commands the multitude to sit down in orderly fashion in groups of fifty and a hundred; benediction, Christ utilizes the five barley loaves and two fishes, furnished by the lad, and asks the blessing of God upon them; distribution, the multitude, being methodically seated, Jesus asks the disciples to co-operate with him and distribute the food to the hungry thousands; participation, all share eagerly and freely of the bounties of Christ's beneficent miracle; satisfaction, all partake of the frugal meal until their hunger is satisfied; conservation, Jesus, not willing that anything useful should be lost, asks that the unused bread and fish, from his miraculous hands, should be carefully preserved for future use. After the five thousand men, and uncounted women and children, had eaten unto complete satisfaction, there were taken up by the apostles twelve baskets of the unused food—a lesson in both the beneficence and the economy of divine providence.

III. Jesus Rejects the Insistent Offer to Become King of the Jews, Mark 6:45-46; Matthew 14:22-23; John 6:14, 15

When the people had eaten to their satisfaction, Jesus first constrained his disciples, somewhat against their desires, to return by boat to Capernaum. Next he dismissed the multitude, which reluctantly left him who had proved to be a miraculous benefactor. The vast multitudes, on their way to the Passover in Jeru-

salem, had heard about the wonderful teacher and worker and had seen a token of his miraculous beneficence. They desire that he shall become their political leader and king, and endeavour to take him by force and set him upon a throne in opposition to Herod Antipas. They fail to understand the spiritual nature of the Messianic reign and are actuated by political motives that would make Jesus a rival of Cæsar. At this time Jesus reaches the climax of a superficial popularity. He has now, within his grasp, the sceptre of the populace. Perhaps, too, even the religious rulers might be induced to follow him if he should become a worldly king in opposition to the Roman rulers. In the midst of these circumstances Jesus goes up into a mountain to fight the battle to a finish in prayer with God. Thus, alone in the mountain, he rejected this subtle temptation. As he had conquered Satan in the wilderness, so he gains the victory over him in the mountains.

Christ indeed is King, but not a political ruler. He steps not upon his throne by the coercion of an excitable multitude, but according to the purposes of God, his Father.

IV. Jesus Appears to His Disciples in the Darkness of Night, Stills the Storm at Sea and Continues His Beneficent Work, Mark 6:47-56; Matthew 14:24-36; John 6:16-21

From the darkness of the mountain heights he looks down upon the sea and beholds his disciples struggling in the midst of the waves. A great storm had suddenly

arisen before they reached the western shore, and they are affrighted and distressed. At the critical moment, about three o'clock in the morning, Jesus appears to them as he walks upon the waves. He is unrecognized at first, but speaks the comforting words, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid." Then impulsive Peter, true to his nature, asks Christ's permission to walk upon the sea. When, however, he sees the destructive waves, he begins to sink, crying, "Lord, save me," and instantly the hand of Jesus sustains him, and soon all land on the other side in safety.

Soon after landing at Genessaret the news of their arrival attracts a great multitude, and Jesus continues his work of healing all who even touch the hem of his garment.

V. Jesus Hastens the Collapse of the Galilean Campaign by His Spiritual Teaching, John 6:22-71

The day after the feeding of the five thousand marked an epoch in the religious life of Capernaum and the movements of Jesus. Jesus brings events to a crisis in Galilee by teaching that he is the true bread of life and not the political Messiah of Jewish expectation. One of the greatest crises in our Saviour's life took place in the synagogue in Capernaum the day after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. When he arrived in Capernaum, the multitude that had eaten of the loaves and fishes the day before were seeking him for another supply of food. They ask the superficial question, "Rabbi, when camest thou

hither? " The mere question of the time of his arrival was insignificant in comparison with the dignity of his person and the power of his message. He at once shows that he fully understands their motives and says, " Ye seek me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled," and then makes the urgent appeal, " Work not for the meat which perisheth but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him the Father, even God, hath sealed." In reply they ask, " What must we do that we may work the works of God? " He reveals the heart of Christianity when he says, " This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Faith in Christ, and not mere human works, whether ceremonial or practical, is the touchstone of Christianity. Evading the real issue, they ask him for a sign that they might believe, stating that their fathers had manna in the wilderness as a token of providential guidance. Christ uses the manna as an object lesson in revealing to them his mission as the bread of life, even the true bread that came down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

The questioning of the Pharisees now turns into murmuring because he said, " I am the bread which came down out of heaven." Jesus teaches them plainly that it is not by the mere will of man but by the purpose and power of God that one is able to appreciate the spiritual significance of the divine life. Their worldly spirit, their carnal appetite, their materialistic notions prevent a spiritual appreciation of the blessings of Christ. Jesus stirs them still more deeply when he

says, "The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." With coarse materialism they fancy that he is to give them his real flesh to eat, and that he expects the Jews, who are exceedingly careful as to their meats, to turn cannibals by actually eating the real flesh of the Son of God. Such an idea is repulsive to spiritual thinking, but Christ presses his doctrine still further when he says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day, for my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed." This is the bold form in which Jesus expresses the absolute necessity of appropriating his blessings by personal faith. Bread nourishes the body only when it is eaten and assimilated, so Christ gives life to the soul only when the individual exercises faith in him as Saviour and Lord.

The hour of destiny has come; the acid test has been applied; all the disciples are being sifted as wheat. We are on the eve of the great collapse, the sad deflection, the spiritual cleavage. When Jesus presses to the limit the spirituality of his kingdom, many of his disciples, followers in general, go back to their old life, making the cleavage so complete that they walk no more with him. They have forsaken the Lord for the flesh-pots of Judaism and the world. The enthusiastic multitude who, the day before, wished to make Jesus their king, now turn their backs upon him in disgustful hate. It is a sad hour for Jesus; sadder still for the people. Only the twelve are left standing by his

side. They alone believe his words, which are spirit and life. Then, with a deep pathos, he asks the twelve, "Would ye also go away?" Literally, "You don't have it in mind to go away, also, have you?" True to his nature, Peter speaks for the twelve, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." This is the first apostolic confession and must have brought great comfort to Christ in this decisive hour. But another shadow falls upon his soul when he remembers that Judas, one of the twelve, shall betray him.

VI. Jesus Clashes with the Pharisaic Committee from Jerusalem on the Question of Traditions, Mark 7:1-23; Matthew 15:1-20; John 7:1

The Jerusalem committee of investigation continue their detective work, pressing their opposition to Christ at every possible point. They had observed how Jesus and his disciples disregarded the Jewish tradition which required the ceremonial washing of the hands prior to each meal. The disciples were cleanly, of course, but not ceremonially punctilious. Before each meal the Jews washed their hands diligently as a religious ceremony. They used the fist of one hand and vigorously rubbed the other hand, even up to the elbow, to get rid of all possible defilement of the flesh. Christ would not object to such a procedure on hygienic grounds, but as a burdensome religious ritual tending to cultivate pride and self-righteousness in a physical cere-

mony which was often a substitute for spiritual cleanliness. When the Pharisees asked the disciples why they transgressed the traditions of the elders in eating bread with defiled or ceremonially unclean hands, Jesus at once lifts the curtain from their hearts. He charges them with leaving a commandment of God, which requires purity of soul, and laying greater emphasis upon a tradition of men which requires only external purification. He shows that they care more for a tradition that violates the word of God than they do for the will of God itself. The Old Testament teaches that children are to honour their father and mother. He shows how they, by a shrewd turn, may relieve themselves of the burden of financially supporting their parents. According to the Jewish tradition, if the financial apportionment to the parents were ceremonially given to the Lord, the children would be relieved of any obligation to support their father and mother. Thus, hypocritically, did many of the Pharisees evade the duty of supporting their parents, while, at the same time, the money was not actually turned into the treasury of the Lord. Such uncleanness of heart was ill-becoming in those who laid great emphasis upon physical ceremonies.

Jesus seizes this occasion to teach the difference between the ceremonial and the spiritual, the internal and the external, the inward and the outward in the religious life. He makes a proclamation of emancipation from all Jewish ritualism, especially the Jewish classification of meats as clean and unclean. "Not that which enters the body can defile the man," says

he, "but that which comes out of the soul." The heart is the fountain of life.

This doctrine offended the Pharisees, and the disciples, dull pupils that they were, did not understand his meaning. So, with sadness, he exclaims to his disciples, "Are ye also, even yet (after all my efforts to teach you the truth), without understanding? The heart is the fountain whence flow the issues of life. From it come evil thoughts which defile or holy thoughts which purify. The condition of the heart rather than the hand; the internal rather than the external; the spiritual rather than the ceremonial; these are the things that count for character and destiny."

VII. Jesus Retires to the Region of Tyre and Sidon and Heals the Daughter of a Syro-Phœnician Woman, Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:21-28

It was a relief to Jesus and the disciples to retire from the unfaithful multitude and the hostile Pharisees and go into a remote territory where his movements would not likely be observed. Hence, into the borders of the great heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon he goes, quietly entering a house in his search for privacy. But it was impossible for him to be alone, for there was a Greek mother whose only little daughter had an unclean spirit. The mother, watchful, prayerful, resourceful, appeals to Jesus for relief. At first Jesus is silent, not through indifference but through a desire to test and develop the woman's faith. She cried so earnestly that even the disciples want Jesus to send

her away by either granting her request or, most likely, without heeding her cry. Jesus says to them in her hearing, " I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That is, his mission was to the Jews first, though ultimately to all nations. The mother, however, made all the more determined by the seeming refusal, comes and worships Jesus, saying in a brief telegram of her soul, " Lord, help me." His reply seems, on the surface, to be unlike his usual kind method of treatment: " It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs," meaning that the blessings he came to bestow were primarily to be given to the children of Israel and not to others, regarded by them as no more worthy to receive the privileges of the Messianic kingdom than dogs are to receive the food intended for the children of the family. With the shrewd intuition of a woman more sensible than sensitive, she makes a happy turn to the words of Jesus, " Yea, Lord, even granting what you say to be true, the little house-dogs are not permitted to starve, but receive at least the crumbs that fall from the Master's table where the children have enough and to spare." The victory has been gained; faith is again triumphant, and Jesus says, " O woman! great is thy faith; be it done unto thee even as thou wilt," and her daughter was healed from that hour.

VIII. Again Jesus Retires to Decapolis, Where He Miraculously Feeds the Four Thousand, Mark 7:31–8:9; Matthew 15:29-38

The journey to Tyre and Sidon was the second with-

drawal of Jesus and his disciples. The third is characterized by a visit to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Seemingly he returns from Phœnicia, in which Tyre and Sidon are located, to Capernaum by way of Decapolis. He may or may not have touched Capernaum when he came back from Tyre and Sidon. He is carefully avoiding the territory of Herod Antipas and seeking all possible seclusion.

Soon friends bring to him a deaf man with an impediment in his speech, deafness and dumbness being closely related, and often found in the same person. Jesus employed a variety of methods in healing the people. In this instance he requested a private interview, then, by way of suggestion and to stimulate confidence, he put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue, and, looking up to heaven, he sighed, saying, "Be opened." His look heavenward would perhaps help the man to look in the same direction, and his sigh would convince him of deepest sympathy. Jesus enjoined silence because he did not wish to assemble crowds even in Decapolis where the Jerusalem committee had not made their appearance. The man, however, published the good news and many brought the afflicted ones and cast them down at Jesus' feet and glorified the God of Israel for his healing power.

The feeding of the five thousand is recorded by all four evangelists; the feeding of the four thousand is recorded by only Mark and Matthew, who report Christ's reference to both events as separate and distinct. The circumstances of the two miracles are

different. There was much green grass where the five thousand were fed, only a desert place in the case of the four thousand; in the former the people had followed Christ only one day, in the latter, three days. Yet in both instances the people are earnest and persevering in following Jesus, and he is compassionate and considerate. When Jesus indicates his unwillingness to send the multitude away fainting and fasting, the disciples seem to be either forgetful of his miracle in feeding the five thousand or hesitate to suggest that he perform another miracle. Hence they ask whence he could find loaves enough in a desert place to satisfy so great a multitude. Every extremity becomes Christ's opportunity. The method of procedure is the same as that in feeding the five thousand. There is the orderly arrangement, the thanks, the breaking of the bread, the distribution by the disciples, the complete satisfaction, the bountiful supply and the wise economy. Four thousand men, besides women and children, are fed and seven basketsfull of the pieces, fresh from the hands of Jesus, are preserved.

IX. Jesus Rejects the Combined Demand of Pharisees and Sadducees for a Sign from Heaven, Mark 8:10-12; Matthew 15:39–16:4

From Decapolis, where Jesus fed the four thousand, he went across the lake to Dalmanutha in Galilee. Suddenly the Pharisees and Sadducees, now for the first time united in their opposition to Jesus, make a sharp attack by demanding a sign from heaven. They

make their appeal to challenge, to test, to ensnare, not to learn and obey. Reading their hearts, Christ sighed deeply in his spirit and curtly refuses to give them a sign and leaves them to their fate. They are beyond redemption; they are sign-seekers, not truth-seekers. They could tell something about the condition of the weather but are unable to interpret the characteristics of the age in which they live.

Jesus crosses the lake as the initial stage of his fourth retirement, which reaches its climax near Cæsarea Philippi on the mount of transfiguration.

Christ turns his back upon the vigilance committee composed of religious detectives from the Pharisees and Sadducees, usually hostile to each other, but now united against him. While he and his disciples are crossing the lake to Bethsaida Julius, he charges them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod. To his surprise and grief they do not understand what he says, but imagine that he is delicately rebuking them because they forgot, in their haste, to bring bread from their home in Capernaum. By a series of questions, Christ reveals to them the dullness of their perception and seeks to drill the truth into their hardened hearts. He had no reference at all to bread for the body, but to the teaching of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Herodians. Each sect had its own peculiar error, which is to be avoided.

On arriving in Bethsaida a blind man appeals for healing. Jesus does not duplicate any previous method of cure, but takes the man by the hand, leads him out

of the village, spits upon his eyes and lays his hand upon him and asks, "Seest thou aught?" The cure is only partial. The man says, "I see men, for I behold them as trees walking." Christ again lays his hand upon his eyes, and the cure is complete. Jesus sends the man away to his home in the country and forbids his even entering the village lest a multitude be assembled and Christ's purpose in seeking retirement be frustrated.

X. Jesus Retires to the Region of Cæsarea Philippi, Where He Tests the Faith of the Twelve in His Messiahship, Mark 8:13–9:1; Matthew 16:5-28; Luke 9:18-27

In company with his disciples, Jesus draws near to Cæsarea Philippi. While on the way he held a special prayer service with the twelve. When the prayer was over he tests the disciples as to his Messiahship. He had been teaching them both in public and in private and revealing himself to them as the Son of man and Son of God. He is now devoting himself wholly to their spiritual enlightenment. He wishes to know, above everything else, what progress he is making in their development. He asks two questions, both significant and one vitally important. The first pertains to their observation and ability to report on current thought. The second relates to their own personal experience and their individual conviction as to his own character and work.

After the prayer is over and all hearts are tender and minds open and expectant, Jesus asks his disciples,

" Who do men say that I am? " The disciples had heard conflicting reports concerning Jesus. He had been classified by various groups of people entertaining diverse ideas concerning him. The disciples report what they had heard about their Master in the following way, " Some think that you are John the Baptist brought back to life; others think that you are Jeremiah, the prophet; some, Elijah, the prophet; others, one of the old prophets." Humanly speaking, the report must have been disappointing. No group of people had properly understood Jesus; the multitudes misinterpreted him. He was classified merely as John the Baptist or one of the prophets, never given the unique position he deserved.

Christ's second question deals not with the multitude but comes at once to the heart of his disciples, " But who say ye that I am? " What they think about Christ is supreme. Do they understand him better than the multitudes? Peter, voicing the deep conviction of the apostolic group, says, " Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God." There are leagues of difference between what the multitudes think and what the disciples believe. With a heart of joy Jesus pronounces a benediction upon the spokesman directly and upon the entire apostolic group implicitly, " Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The conviction of the deity and Messiahship of Jesus was not a matter of blood, of natural hereditary conception, but a matter of divine revelation which Peter and the others perceived and confessed. Addressing

Peter specifically, Jesus says, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Christ replies directly to Peter, for he alone is speaking, though voicing the faith of the twelve. Christ makes a rhetorical play on the word Peter, which means rock, a symbol of moral and spiritual solidity and given to this apostle by way of prophecy when he was won to Christ by his brother, Andrew, on the banks of the Jordan.

The phrase, "this rock," seems to signify the fact of the deity of Christ divinely revealed, personally believed and publicly confessed. These three conceptions are really one, since by faith Peter, as a stone, rests on Christ, the one foundation. And from the necessity of the case, all future living stones, or believers, are built on him and those like him, though resting ultimately on Christ, the only foundation of faith and hope.

The church is the congregation, the assembly, the body of believers consisting of persons who have been spiritually changed by the revelation of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, who alone can enable one to see the kingdom of God and spiritually discern the things of God. Those belonging to this church have personally trusted in Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God, and are therefore willing to recognize his supremacy in their lives. Only spiritual regeneration and personal faith can incorporate one into the assembly of the saints and the body of believers.

Peter, in his first epistle, groups the two conceptions

of building and body (I Peter 2:3-9). He represents Christ as a living stone, the chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and regenerated believers are those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and as living stones are built up a spiritual house. So the ever-growing group of saved believers is represented as a building, an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, having been bought by the blood of his son, and who are to offer spiritual sacrifices and by their consecrated lives to show forth the excellencies of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light (I Peter 2:9).

The gates of Hades are really gates of entrance into the unseen world through the portals of death. So death, with all its destructive forces, shall never prevail against the spiritual building, the holy assembly and body of regenerated believers in the deity of Christ. Death shall never remove from earth that group of loyal souls of which Peter was a member. The kind of people represented by Peter in his confession shall be perpetuated to the end of time. The " Peter groups " of believers, to whom the Father hath revealed the Son, and by whom the Son is confessed as divine, shall have an abiding place on earth until Christ shall come again. This is the vital, continuous, spiritual, unbroken and unbreakable succession of believers in the deity of Christ through the revelation of the Father. We have an infallible guarantee of the perpetuity of Christ's loyal people until time shall be no more.

The keys of the kingdom are the conditions of en-

trance and the right to proclaim those conditions by the authority of him who owns the building and the keys. Peter proclaimed the terms of salvation, the conditions of becoming living stones and members of the new spiritual race and nation, both at Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius. He was not left free any more than others to formulate the terms of admission into the family and kingdom of God. The conditions of salvation are divinely stipulated, and Peter's authority, the authority of the other apostles, of the church and of all believers was given by the Lord himself. Man speaks with authority only when he proclaims the words of Christ. Authority resides not in man, but in the living God. All who have Peter's experience have Peter's authority, or the right to announce and enjoin the conditions of life according to the will of God.

Keys control entrance and exit. The keys to the kingdom signify the power to admit and the power to deny admission, according to the divine will. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

The disciples and the church, as a divine institution, have the same authority that was conferred upon Peter, because the same words, "bind" and "loose," are employed in Matthew 18:18, where the plural number is used in referring to the disciples and most likely to the church members themselves. So whatever authority was accorded to Peter was also given to the groups of believers having Peter's faith and experience.

It is the privilege and duty of all true believers to use the keys of the kingdom; that is, to proclaim by the authority of Christ the conditions of salvation and entrance into the kingdom of God. The sovereignty of Christ, expressed in the revelation of his will, gives all believers the power to forbid and the power to allow; the power to loose and the power to bind; the power to make obligatory and the power to make optional; the power to proclaim by the authority of Christ his own will expressed in divine revelation.

It was a joy to Christ to find by this examination of the apostles that at least a few men, in the midst of the general confusion and opposition, understood his nature and mission. He enjoined silence upon the apostles, because if they should proclaim him publicly as the Messiah the people would read into that term their own worldly ideas of a political ruler, and thus revive and intensify the general excitement concerning Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and rival of the Roman emperor.

Jesus now enters upon a new phase of teaching his disciples concerning his mission. Only when the twelve had attained sufficient spiritual discernment to recognize him as the true Old Testament Messiah, instead of the Pharisaic worldly Messiah, did Jesus begin to teach them the doctrine of his death and resurrection. And even now they are unable to understand the deep significance of the cross and his literal power over death and the grave. From the time of the great confession onward, Christ repeatedly announced

his sufferings and death with ever-increasing details, always giving emphasis to the word of hope and victory by specifically asserting the fact of his resurrection.

Peter, doubtless voicing again the feelings of the twelve, says to Christ, impulsively and vigorously, "Be it far from thee, Lord," or, "May the Lord have mercy on thee and keep thee from such a tragic end." In the presence of the disciples Jesus gives Peter the scathing rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block unto me, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." How suddenly and woefully are the mighty fallen! Peter, a stone in the temple of God, suddenly becomes a rock of offense to the Lord of the temple. Perhaps he became too highly elated over the recent honour conferred upon him and presumed, with too great familiarity and authority, to oppose the course of destiny the Saviour had just announced. He displayed the worldly spirit instead of the sacrificial; he had in view only the crown and not the cross, while Christ had in view the crown by way of the cross.

Satan here is transformed into an angel of light and uses as his agent the foremost apostle, whose lips had just made the great confession. Satan renews the wilderness temptation and presents to Christ, through Peter, the path of roses instead of the path of thorns; the way of ease to the Messianic throne instead of the way of the cross to the Messianic crown.

Naturally Peter makes no response. He is completely defeated and crushed; he has made a great

mistake; has been severely rebuked and completely silenced.

Christ now enlarges upon the principle of sacrifice he has just announced. He had spoken of his own approaching death and the attainment of the crown by way of the cross; he now applies the principle of self-sacrifice to all who will come after him. Instead of the way of the cross being a lonely way, it is the only way for those who would be like Christ in spirit and in life. So Christ says to all, and not to Peter only, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me, for whosoever shall lose his life for my sake the same shall save it." The law of self-sacrifice is the first law of the Christian life. He who is willing to sacrifice the lower life for the higher shall possess the higher life in great abundance, but he who would sacrifice the higher life for the lower shall make a wreck of life for time and eternity. For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his own self? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? The way of the cross is the way of Christ and the way of his followers.

To make all the more insistent Christ's claims upon his followers, he portrays the judgment scene in which all men shall behold in the final day his face of love and see him on his throne of glory. Those who, in the courage of faith, have not denied him here but confessed his name and walked by his side, will he confess before the angels of God, but those who have denied him, through the cowardice of unbelief and the spirit

of selfishness, will he deny in that day for which all other days are made.

XI. Christ is Transfigured on a Mountain and Heals a Demoniac Boy at the Foot of the Mountain, Mark 9:2-29; Matthew 17:1-20; Luke 9:28-43

We have no record of the week between the great confession and the transfiguration. Christ's rebuke of Peter and the severe rules he laid down for discipleship doubtless put a strain on their relationship. The twelve did not fully understand Christ's character and mission even after all his matchless teaching and his mighty works, but Christ feels that some of the disciples are able to appreciate him and are prepared to enter into his secrets and glory. Knowing that another crisis is upon him, Jesus goes up into a mountain (perhaps Mount Hermon) to pray, and takes with him three choice spirits—Peter, James and John—who had been with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus to life and will be with him in his agony in Gethsemane.

"And it came to pass that while he was praying he was transfigured before them, and his garments became as the light, glistening exceedingly white, surpassing the fuller's art, and his face shone as the sun in its strength." The scene was more than a celestial pantomime presenting an external glow of heavenly splendour; it was the bursting forth of the inherent glory Christ had with the Father before the foundation of the world.

Two heavenly visitors—Moses and Elijah—joined

Jesus and the three elect disciples. The theme of their conversation was the death of Christ, the very topic he had announced and briefly discussed a week before. A meaningful word in Jewish history, and not the ordinary term for death, is employed to express the subject of conversation. They talked about the *exodus* which Christ should soon accomplish at Jerusalem, his deliverance from the limitations of human life, and his victory over sin and death. The law and the prophets had foreshadowed the suffering and triumph of the Messiah, and now their chief representatives, Moses and Elijah, talked with Jesus about the central theme of the Old Testament, the chief purpose of his incarnation and the heart of all Gospel preaching.

The three apostles are stricken by the supernal glory, but Peter, as usual, is moved to speak, though confessedly not knowing what he says. Yet his words come forth impulsively from a loving heart. He asks Christ's permission to build three tabernacles on the mountain, one for Christ himself, one for Moses and one for Elijah. Perhaps he feels that he, James and John can dispense with tabernacles for themselves if only they be permitted to continue in the glorious companionship of Jesus, Moses and Elijah. The request is passed by in silence, but out of the overshadowing cloud there comes the Father's voice saying, concerning Jesus, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." Hearing the voice of the Father, the disciples fall on their faces in incontrollable fear, but the tender touch and comforting words of Jesus bring quietness of spirit; and, lifting up their

eyes, they see Jesus only, Moses and Elijah having suddenly departed.

We have suggested by this marvellous scene several lessons: the importance of prayer in the crises of life; the glory of the Son of God which shone forth in its original splendour, revealing the deity of Christ; the persistence of personality beyond death, which is only transportation, not annihilation; Moses and Elijah and all other departed saints preserve their personal identity; the supremacy of the cross, which filled the horizon of Christ's life, is the all-absorbing theme of the heavenly visitors; the sovereignty of Christ, of whom the Father said, " Hear ye him," who is the fulfilment of the law represented by Moses and of the prophets represented by Elijah.

The words of approval, spoken by the Father, must have greatly strengthened Christ for his approaching sufferings and death, as similar words at his baptism helped him to gain the victory in the wilderness temptation. They give him assurance that the Father understands and commends his course, though men oppose and condemn. Furthermore, the three disciples are better prepared by the transfiguration to endure the strain and stress of the coming months since they have the assurance of the Messiahship of Jesus from Moses, Elijah and the heavenly Father.

While going down the mountain Jesus told the three disciples not to report the transfiguration until the Son of man should rise from the dead, lest undue excitement be created through the misconception of his character and work and a crisis in his life

be precipitated by his inveterate enemies and fanatical followers. The dullness of even the three most intimate disciples, and their difficulty in correcting wrong, preconceived opinions, are shown by their inability to understand what Christ meant by rising from the dead. They seem to have had an unsatisfactory discussion as to the meaning of this obvious phrase.

They are also perplexed as to the real historic situation in the light of the teaching of the scribes, who say that Elijah must precede the Messiah and prepare the people for his coming. They had been taught that Elijah would come to earth in person, but Jesus informs them that John the Baptist really fulfilled the prophecy concerning Elijah.

The scene in the life of Christ suddenly changes from celestial glory to human suffering. As the glory of the Lord shone on top of the mountain, the work of Satan was manifested at its base. Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus was seeking quietude and seclusion with his disciples, multitudes were in waiting as he and the three disciples reached the foot of the mountain. There was great excitement and both sorrow and fiendish joy over the failure of the nine disciples to cast a dumb demon out of a young man brought to them by his father. Had they been praying as earnestly at the foot of the mountain as Jesus prayed when he was transfigured on the side of the mountain they would doubtless have gained the victory over Satan to the restoration of the boy, the joy of the father and the honour of Christ.

The father is not altogether discouraged. He makes a direct appeal to Jesus, kneeling before him in humility and beseeching him in faith, "Lord, have mercy on my son—mine only child." The father pathetically says, "I besought thy disciples to cast the demon out, and they could not." In the anguish of his heart he records the failure of unbelief to do the work of God. Jesus rebukes the generation for their lack of faith, but gives a ray of hope to the distressed father. Satan makes a final struggle in the decisive battle, and in a great convulsion the only child falls to the ground in agony. This but spurs the father on to a final appeal to Jesus in behalf of his son, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." He does not doubt the willingness of Jesus but is not fully assured as to his power. Hence, Jesus repeats the phrase, "If thou canst," and adds, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Straightway the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Whereupon Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to depart, and, amid the struggles of apparent death, the demon departed and the son was delivered to his father, and the people were astonished at the majesty of God.

Continuing their journey, Jesus and the disciples enter a house where the disciples ask him privately why it is they were unable to cast out the demon, doubtless feeling keenly the bitterness and chagrin of their failure. Jesus replies, "Because of your little faith and your lack of prayer." Even a living faith comparable to a grain of mustard seed would have

given them the victory, but while they lingered at the foot of the mountain, during the transfiguration, they had been prayerless and perhaps critical and were, therefore, unable to cast out the demon, an important part of the mission they were sent to fulfil.

The great painter, Raphael, in portraying the transfiguration, represents both the scene on top of the mountain and the scene at the foot of the mountain. Some have ventured to criticize the artist for combining two opposite scenes into one portrait, but he is both artistic and scriptural in his portrayal. The same word is employed to describe the glory of Christ on the mountain when he is transfigured and his glory at the foot of the mountain when he casts out demons. Years afterward, when Peter writes of the transfiguration, he speaks of the voice that came to Christ from the *majestic glory*, while Luke, in describing the feelings of the people when they witnessed the casting out of the demon, says that the multitude was astonished at the *majesty of God*.

XII. Jesus Returns Privately Through Galilee to Capernaum and Pays the Half Shekel for the Temple Tax, Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 17:22-27; Luke 9:43-45

After the transfiguration, and events connected therewith, Jesus returns privately through Galilee and, for the second time, foretells his death and resurrection to his disciples. From now on Jesus becomes more specific concerning his approaching crucifixion, but always illumines the chamber of death with the light

of his resurrection. The disciples do not seem to understand the teaching of his sacrifice and victory. A reverent fear restrains them and prevents their asking him more specifically about his passion and resurrection.

Jesus now ends his period of withdrawals and remains at his headquarters in Capernaum for perhaps only a few days before he leaves Galilee as the centre of his activities and enters upon his journey to Jerusalem, where the fatal climax is speedily reached. Several events occur in Capernaum before he says good-bye to the metropolis by the sea.

Due to absence from the city, Jesus had not made the annual contribution of a half shekel in payment of the temple tax. Of course his critics would not let this seeming delinquency pass by unnoticed. Those who received the tax therefore approach Peter, the leading spirit of the apostolic group, and ask him whether Jesus is accustomed to paying the temple tax, and he gives a prompt and affirmative answer. In private conversation Jesus proves that as a son of the King he is exempt from taxation, but lest his failure to pay the temple tax be misconstrued, and he thereby become a stumbling-block, he gives directions to Simon Peter to go fishing and procure the necessary money for payment of the tax. Peter has immediate success and pays the tax for both Jesus and himself. Christ thus sets an excellent example of loyalty and liberty—liberty exercised along the path of loyalty. He had a right to refuse to pay the tax; he was also at liberty to pay it.

XIII. Jesus Teaches That the Subjects of His Kingdom Must Be Childlike in Disposition, Mark 9:33-37; Matthew 18:1-5; Luke 9:46-48

During these final days in Capernaum several important incidents occur. Evidently the apostles did not understand that Jesus intended to confer any special primacy on Peter. It is possible, however, that the nine disciples that remained at the foot of the mountain were envious of the honour shown to Peter, James and John when Jesus favoured them with an opportunity to witness his transfiguration. It was on their way from the foot of the mountain to Capernaum that they indulged in heated discussion. While quietly resting in the house of their headquarters, Jesus asked them pointedly what they were reasoning about so vehemently on their return to the city. They were greatly astonished, not knowing that he was aware of their unseemly dispute, and held their peace in shame. Whereupon Jesus sat down, thus assuming the attitude of a teacher, and called the twelve disciples around him, took a little child, set him by his side, then took the little one into his arms and taught the disciples in the most concrete and effective way the supreme need of humility in his followers. He spoke to them words which must have sunk deep into their hearts, as they have into the hearts of God's people in all ages, " Verily I say unto you, except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the king-

dom of heaven; and whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."

XIV. Jesus Rebukes the Mistaken Zeal of John, Who Shows Loyalty and Narrowness, Mark 9:38-50; Matthew 18:6-14; Luke 9:49-50

John, perturbed in spirit, came to Jesus and said, " Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him because he followed not us." John may have thought that such manifestation of zeal and courage, and jealousy of the honour of Jesus would receive words of commendation, but over against John's words, " We forbade him," Jesus said, " Forbid him not." The stranger was evidently doing the work of the Lord, for there was no question concerning the reality of his casting out demons. After all, that was the supreme task and crucial test of a divine mission. The only criticism that could be offered against him was that he did not choose to leave his work and blend his enterprise with that of John. He was not, however, divinely called to join the apostolic group; consequently, no lack of loyalty could be brought against him. Jesus practically says, " The stranger is evidently doing a good work. You need not follow him, but do not compel him to follow you. Agree to disagree. So long as both are casting out demons in my name, and therefore by my power, there is no occasion for a breach of fellowship."

Jesus then mildly rebukes John in a series of concrete and pertinent parables. One follower of Christ is not to antagonize another follower of Christ, but is

to extend a helping hand rather than to become a rock of offense. He is to do the Lord's work and never do the bidding of Satan. Although occasions of stumbling will come, God's people are not to be the agents of their creation. The hand, the foot and the eye are important, but it is better to suffer the loss of these members than to have our influence discounted and to become the occasion of others stumbling over us into perdition. Therefore, the use of our influence is a serious matter. We are not to despise, not to undervalue, much less haughtily disregard the little ones that believe in Jesus—the young in age, the immature in experience and the weak in faith—because heaven is interested in even the least of Christ's followers. There is joy among the angels when sinners are saved and when weak saints are confirmed in the faith.

XV. Jesus Illustrates the Spirit of Forgiveness by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matthew 18:15-35

The problem of forgiveness is vital and perennial. Jesus knows how difficult it is to pluck out the unforgiving spirit from the hearts of his disciples. He suggests a very different course from that usually adopted in cases of personal misunderstanding and bitterness. He tells his disciples that when anyone sins against them not to wait for the erring brother to come and make amends, but to go to the transgressor, not with abuse but in a kindly spirit. Many a personal difficulty would be promptly and permanently removed if this simple direction of Jesus were followed. In case,

however, no progress is made when the offended and offender come together, the aggrieved brother is to take with him one or two others, of wisdom and fraternal spirit, and in their presence make a prayerful effort to effect a reconciliation. If, however, the offending brother refuse to hear this committee, the matter is to be taken to the church for adjustment. If he refuse to hear and follow the counsel of the church, he is to be regarded as a Gentile and a publican. He has forfeited, by his very spirit and manner, fellowship with his brethren. He, himself, has broken the bond of union. But even Gentiles and publicans are to be won, so the offending brother is not doomed eternally, but may still repent and be forgiven.

It is important to notice in this connection that Jesus says to his disciples, " Whatsoever things ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Here the plural number is used—" ye "—not Peter only, but all the apostles and even the church, composed of true believers. This scriptural prerogative of binding and loosing does not belong to an individual only, even though he be an apostle.

The very difficulty of maintaining a forgiving spirit may account for Christ's introducing the necessity and importance of *group praying* in this connection, for he says, " If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The disciples are evidently aroused on the question of forgiveness, and Peter, true to his impulsive nature, acts as spokesman and says, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" And then, feeling that perhaps he had gotten to a generous limit, he asks, "Until seven times?" Jesus perceives that Peter fails to grasp the quality of a forgiving spirit by introducing mathematics into spiritual relations, so he saith unto him, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Jesus takes the matter of forgiveness out of the realm of numbers and places it in the region of love. Seventy times seven is a symbol of an indefinite number of offenses. A mother does not keep a memorandum of the offenses of her child. Our love for each other is to transcend the bounds of arithmetic. We are to keep on forgiving as we hope to be forgiven.

To illustrate the problem of forgiveness, Jesus gives the parable of the unmerciful servant who, though forgiven a debt of ten million dollars, refuses to forgive one of his servants a debt of ten dollars. God has forgiven us infinitely more than we are called upon to forgive each other. If we do not have a spirit that will forgive our fellow-men, especially the members of the household of faith, we have no assurance that our heavenly Father will forgive our trespasses.

XVI. Jesus Emphasizes the Doctrine of Absolute Self-denial Enjoined Upon His Followers, Matthew 8:19-22; Luke 9:57-62

The followers of Christ must give up everything for

his service, take up their cross daily and follow him. We have an illustration of a rash follower in the Scribe who impulsively volunteered, saying, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." He had not counted the cost, and was evidently expecting worldly honour and promotion. Hence, Jesus gives the significant reply, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Seemingly this ended the incident, and the Scribe doubtless refused to follow one so humble and lowly.

Jesus describes two volunteers who subordinated his claims to other objects nearest their hearts. They did not put Christ first. One of the volunteers said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father,"—that is, "Wait until my family obligations are fulfilled. I cannot go as long as my father lives." It was a common family excuse. Many young men and young women have failed to follow Christ in the homeland and to foreign fields because of a misconceived idea of their duties to their relatives. Christ says pointedly, "Follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead. Put me first; otherwise you cannot be my disciple." Duties never conflict, but Christ must always be first—never second.

Another illustration of a *dilatory volunteer* is the man who said, "I will follow thee, Lord, but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house." He was not willing to follow Jesus immediately and wholeheartedly. Christ's reply is very significant, "No man having put his hands to the plow and looking back is

fit for the kingdom of God." We must plow a straight furrow in the vineyard of the Lord. We must keep our eyes fixed on our destination and our hearts supremely loyal to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF CONCENTRATION—JESUS FACING JERUSALEM

(This period is divided into two general sections, the later Judean Ministry and the later Perean Ministry)

I. Jesus Attends the Feast of Tabernacles: Nine Characteristics of Jesus Presented in the Discussions that Ensued
   1. The Teacher of Truth
      a. The character and teaching of Jesus become a mooted question among the throngs at the feast
      b. Jesus charges his enemies with violation of the Mosaic law against murder
      c. Many believe on Jesus in spite of Pharisaic calumny
   2. The Water of Life
      a. Jesus offers himself as life-giving water
      b. The multitude is divided concerning Jesus, his enemies more enraged, Nicodemus quietly asks that justice be shown Jesus
   3. The Hope of the Penitent
   4. The Light of the World
   5. The Redeemer of Sinners
   6. The Liberator of Man
   7. The Destroyer of Death
   8. The Revealer of God
      a. A blind man is cured
      b. Rapid events follow this miracle:
         (1) Neighbours and acquaintances are astonished
         (2) Pharisees interrogate the healed man
         (3) The Jews appeal to his parents to find out if the man had really been blind
         (4) The Jews examine him a second time and try to browbeat him into repudiating Jesus
         (5) The healed man is ejected from the synagogue
         (6) The healed man believes in Jesus
   9. The Shepherd of His People

II. Jesus Enlarges His Program for Judea
   1. Jesus sends forth seventy disciples
      a. The seventy sent out
      b. Their joyful return

2. Jesus teaches who are our real neighbours by the parable of the Good Samaritan
3. Jesus becomes the guest in the house of his friends at Bethany
4. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray
5. Jesus casts out demons by the "finger of God"
   a. Jesus makes a threefold answer to the charge of league with Beelzebub
   b. Jesus replies to a laudatory exclamation from the crowd
   c. Jesus again announces the opportunity-responsibility principle
6. Jesus takes breakfast in the house of a critical Pharisee; six woes are pronounced on the Pharisees
7. Jesus speaks to his disciples and many thousands of the multitude on vital themes
   a. Hypocrisy
   b. Covetousness
   c. Worldly anxiety
   d. Watchfulness
   e. Christ's mission
   f. Spiritual vision
8. Jesus teaches that all must repent or perish, and refers to two current tragedies to emphasize the doctrine
   a. Jesus employs two current historic allusions to urge the universal necessity of repentance
   b. Jesus gives a parable to teach God's justice
9. Jesus heals a crippled woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath

III. Jesus Returns to Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication

IV. Jesus Enters upon His Later Perean Ministry
1. Jesus urges personal salvation
   a. Jesus ignores an inquiry about the number saved
   b. Jesus shows a lack of fear for the wily Herod and laments over Jerusalem
2. Jesus teaches at a breakfast table on the Sabbath
   a. Jesus heals a man of his dropsy and defends his act
   b. Four lessons given, lessons in helpfulness, humility, hospitality, and spiritual satisfaction
3. Jesus demands self-denial in his followers
4. Jesus defends his attitude toward sinners in the parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin and Lost Son
5. Jesus illustrates the doctrine of stewardship in the three parables of the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Unprofitable Servant

6. Jesus returns to Bethany near Jerusalem and raises Lazarus from the dead
   a. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead
   b. The miracle has a signal effect on the people, the Sanhedrin, and on the movements of Jesus

V. Jesus Enters Upon His Last Journey to Jerusalem by Way of Samaria and Galilee
1. Jesus heals ten lepers
2. Jesus explains what he means by the Kingdom of God
3. Jesus teaches the importance of perseverance and humility in prayer
   a. The parable of the Unjust Judge, importunity in prayer
   b. The parable of the Pharisee and Publican at Prayer, humility in prayer
4. Jesus expresses himself on the question of divorce
5. Jesus blesses little children and illustrates the nature of the Kingdom of God
6. Jesus teaches the rich young ruler the way of life
   a. The tragedy of "the great refusal"
   b. Jesus points out the spiritual handicap of riches
   c. Peter is instructed in the reward and peril of discipleship
7. Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a householder who wanted to secure good labourers for his vineyard
8. Still facing Jerusalem, Jesus again foretells the manner of his approaching death and the fact of the resurrection
9. Jesus rebukes the selfish ambition of James and John and points out the path of true greatness
10. Jesus heals blind Bartimæus and his companion near Jericho
11. Jesus visits Zacchæus and saves his household
12. Jesus speaks the parable of the Pounds and continues his journey to Jerusalem

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF CONCENTRATION—CHRIST FACING JERUSALEM

At the close of the period of isolation, during which time Christ devoted himself almost exclusively to the training of his disciples, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem to present himself to the people for the last time and to be cruelly treated and crucified. During this general period of concentration, he made several journeys to Jerusalem and crowded the months with manifold activities. This period may be divided into two sections—the later Judean ministry, which probably extended from the feast of tabernacles to the dedication (or about three months, A. D. 29), and, second, the later Perean ministry, from the feast of dedication to the last journey to Jerusalem (about three and one-half months).

We will consider first the events occurring during the later Judean ministry. An account of this ministry is given only by John and Luke—the Jerusalem section by John, and the Judean section by Luke.

I. Jesus Attends the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7:2–10:21

The half-brothers of Jesus urged him to abandon his Galilean ministry even before he had planned to do so.

They hoped that he might reveal himself openly to the people in Jerusalem. He refused to go at the time and in the manner that they dictated, but followed his own plan of privately going up to Jerusalem, avoiding the caravan route crowded with multitudes attending the feast of tabernacles, which celebrated the period when the children of Israel sojourned in tabernacles in the wilderness. When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem his presence created intense excitement. There was a division of sentiment as to his Messiahship. The rulers, incited by the Jews, the chief priests and Pharisees, sought to arrest him and to bring him to a speedy end. The multitudes from Galilee were divided in their opinions concerning his person and mission, so also were the Jerusalem populace. The Roman officers were so impressed with his majesty and words that they refused to arrest him, while Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, spoke mildly but courageously in his behalf. There are nine characteristics of Jesus presented in the discussions that took place at the feast of tabernacles and shortly thereafter in Jerusalem.

1. The Teacher of Truth, John 7:11-36.

Upon the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem, the multitudes murmured concerning his character and influence. Some thought he was a good man; others said he led the multitude astray. There was a hushed conversation concerning him, because the fear of the Jews prevented an open expression of opinion. In the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught with marvellous effect. The Jews wondered how he was able thus to teach, having never received technical

training; not being a man of letters and of learning according to the rabbinical ideal. He came to the heart of the matter when he said, " My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." Christ thus enunciated a fundamental principle of knowledge and life. A willingness to obey is always rewarded by the knowledge essential to acceptable obedience. If we *will* to know, we *may* know, we *shall* know.

Christ charges them with the violation of the Mosaic law in that they seek to kill him. He can see from their faces that murder is in their hearts. When he asks the pointed question, " Why seek ye to kill me? " the multitude thinks that he has a demon, not knowing the deep plot of the rulers.

Christ refers to the decisive miracle that he performed in Jerusalem, near the beginning of his ministry, when he healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda. This he did on the Sabbath day and provoked the first intense opposition and hatred of the Jews. Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem ask, " Is not this he whom they seek to kill? " and wonder why he speaks boldly and openly without being arrested. They ask pointedly, " Can it be that the rulers know indeed that this is the Christ? " They then brush the question aside, virtually saying, " He cannot be the Christ, for we know his origin. When Christ cometh no one knoweth whence he is." In reply Christ claims to be sent from the Father, and they have it in their hearts to arrest him, but no man lays hands on him

because his hour is not yet come. In response to his teaching many believe on him. This new accession of recruits stirs the chief priests and Pharisees all the more, and they send officers to have Christ arrested. But before they make their report, the last day of the feast arrives.

2. The Water of Life, John 7:37-52.

On the last day, which was the greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." These words are strikingly similar to the message he delivered to the woman of Samaria to whom he said, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but he that drinketh of the water I shall give him shall never thirst, for the water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." By the figure of rivers of living water Jesus refers to the Spirit whose refreshing and cleansing power would give new life and joy to his followers.

The multitude is divided in their opinion concerning him. Some say he is a prophet, others—"This is the Christ." The division is so sharp that some of the multitude would have him arrested by force, but a mighty, unseen power restrains them. At this juncture the officers sent to arrest him make their report to the chief priests and Pharisees who ask the pointed question, "Why did ye not bring him?", and receive the significant answer, "Never man spake like this man." The Pharisees are enraged and say to the officers, "Are

ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him or of the Pharisees? But this multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed." From their point of view only the rabble believed in Jesus, not the rulers, not the men of prominence. They have it in their hearts to condemn Jesus without any legal ceremony; but Nicodemus, who had a memorable interview with Jesus at night on a former visit to Jerusalem, asks the significant question, "Doth our law judge a man except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" This is not a vigorous defense of Jesus, but a timely word of simple justice. They reply to Nicodemus with an insinuating question, "Art thou also of Galilee and therefore takest up for thy countryman?" Then they endeavour to settle the question in a superficial way, revealing their ignorance, "Search and see that out of Galilee riseth no prophet." They would settle greatness by their own prejudice and mere geography.

3. The Hope of the Penitent, John 8:1-11.

Perhaps this section does not belong to the New Testament canon, yet it doubtless gives a true incident for both our encouragement and warning.

The Scribes and Pharisees, with fiendish delight, bring to Jesus a woman taken in adultery, hoping to find some cause or occasion for accusing him. They quote the law of Moses which demands death for such a sin, and ask him to state his position as to the case in hand. Jesus easily extricates himself from the dilemma. With perfect self-possession he stoops down and writes something, we know not what, on the

ground. His seeming indifference or perplexity causes a repetition of their demands. He replies by saying, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," and quietly resumes his writing.

Conscience-smitten, his accusers promptly and silently retire in orderly procession, beginning with the eldest, until all disappear. Then Jesus, raising himself up and seeing the woman alone, asks her, "Woman, where are these thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She says, "No man, Lord," and Jesus replies in words of sympathy, pardon and admonition, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

4. The Light of the World, John 8:12-20.

The feast being over, Jesus again enters the temple and makes a stupendous claim which greatly angers the Pharisees. He says, with quietness and modesty, conscious of its truth, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." This is indeed a high and holy claim which no mere man could ever make in sincerity and truth. The Pharisees quickly say, "That is what you claim for yourself. You are your own witness, and your testimony is not true." To this Jesus replies, "Even if I bear witness of myself, and this I do because I know myself, nevertheless my witness is true, for I know whence I came and whither I go; so my witness of myself is based upon perfect knowledge." Furthermore, Jesus says, "According to your own law two witnesses are enough to establish the truth of a proposition, so in substantiating my claims I bring the

legal number. I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." They see in this Christ's claim of equality with the Father, therefore ask, " Where is thy Father? " Jesus makes reply, " If ye knew me ye would know my Father also." " These words were spoken in the treasury as he taught in the temple, but no man dared to take him because his hour was not yet come." Human desire was curbed by divine restraint.

5. The Redeemer of Sinners, John 8:21-30.

Again teaching in the temple, Jesus says, " I go away and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." They seem to be more solicitous about where Jesus is going than about the sad fact of their dying in sin and being unable to be with him in the future world. " The only possible way," says Jesus, " to avoid dying in sin is to believe that I am he." That is, faith in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the only Saviour of men, is the only way to avoid living in sin, dying in sin and enduring eternal penalty for sin. In their perplexity the Jews ask, " Who art thou? " Jesus gives a consistent reply, " The same that I have always told you, even from the beginning. When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me I speak these things. He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that are pleasing to him." As he spake these things, many believed on him. To these believers Jesus said, " If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my

disciples, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

6. The Liberator of Man, John 8:31-51.

When Jesus spoke of the freedom of those who abide in him through the truth, the Jews resented the intimation that they are not enjoying the blessings of liberty but are in spiritual bondage. They say, "We have never been in bondage," although at that moment their nation was under the iron heel of the Roman Government. "What do you mean, therefore," they ask, "by the assertion, 'Ye shall be made free?'" Jesus shows that he refers to the bondage of sin, and then declares, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He then charges them with a lack of conformity to the faith of Abraham, whom they claim as their father. He admits that they are literal descendants of Abraham, but shows how unlike the patriarch they are in faith and life. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," he says pointedly, "but instead ye do the works of your father, who is not Abraham, but Satan." Not being spiritual descendants of Abraham, they are not morally able to understand what Jesus says; hence, Christ describes their spiritual condition and paternity in these words, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." Then, in the sublime consciousness of his own sinlessness, he says, "Which of you convicteth me of sin? What I say is the truth of God, and ye believe me not because ye are not of God." Then, in a burst of anger, they repeat their former charge, "Say we not well that thou art a

Samaritan and hast a demon? " Jesus quietly replies that he is not serving the devil, but is honouring the Father.

7. The Destroyer of Death, John 8:52-59.

Jesus sends another poignant arrow into their hearts—" Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my word he shall never see death." Instantly they say in passion, " Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham is dead and the prophets, and thou sayest, ' If a man keep my word he shall never taste of death.' Art thou greater than our father, Abraham, which is dead and the prophets are dead? Whom makest thou thyself? " They evidently think they have gained the victory, because the great men of God in the olden days had passed away and they think that Jesus claims for his followers complete exemption from death. To this Jesus replies that he is glorifying the Father whom they reject and says, with calm assurance, " Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." The implication is that though they see him and hear his words, they are unlike their father, Abraham, for they are enraged and seek to slay him while Abraham rejoiced to behold by faith the coming of the true seed of promise. With dull perception and crass literalism they say, " Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? " Jesus said unto them, " Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was I *am*." Jesus can guarantee exemption from spiritual death, because he is self-existent. " He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Before Abraham was I am " (not " I *was* "). Christ existed in eternity

without a human body before he came into the world, and in a body of flesh and blood while on earth, and exists in a glorified human body after he conquered death. Enraged by the claims of Jesus, the Jews took up stones to cast at him, but he hid himself and went out of the temple in quiet majesty that defied arrest.

8. The Revealer of God, John 9:1-41.

One of the most striking wayside ministries of Jesus was the healing of a man blind from his birth. As Jesus and his disciples pass along the streets of Jerusalem, they ask him concerning the blind man, " Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? " To this question, which reveals some of the false doctrines of the day, Jesus replies, " The blindness of this man is not a punishment for his own sin nor the sins of his parents; it is simply a misfortune giving an opportunity for God to manifest his mercy and power." And then, incorporating his own followers with himself in such a beneficent work, he says, " We must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. When I am in the world I am the light of the world." And as the light of the world he is to give sight to the blind man and reveal the love and power of God. Jesus had no stereotyped method for performing his miracles of healing. In this instance he spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay and said, " Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam." The man promptly obeyed and immediately received his sight.

Rapid movements come before us upon the healing

of the blind man. *First,* the *neighbours* and acquaintances are astonished and perplexed, some saying positively, " It is he." The new light in his face produced such a change that others merely said, " He is like him." He alone knows of the great transaction and says, " I am he," and they ask, " How, then, were thine eyes opened? ", and the healed man tells the facts.

Second, the *Pharisees* also ask him how he received his sight, and the healed man repeats the facts to them. The Pharisees are divided not on the fact of the miracle but on the character of Jesus. They ask the man his opinion of Christ, and he says, " He is a prophet."

Third, the *Jews appeal* to the man's parents. The Jews did not believe that the case of healing was genuine. They thought that the man had never been blind and appealed to his parents for their testimony. They bear witness on two points: first, " This is our son;" second, " We know that he was born blind, but as to the oft-repeated questions *how* he was made to see, or *who* opened his eyes, we do not know." However, they really did know but referred the matter peremptorily to their son, saying, " He is of age; ask him. He shall speak for himself." They desired to shift the responsibility to their son and save themselves from the persecution of the Jews.

Fourth, the *Jews examine* the man the second time. They try to rob Christ of the honour due his name and say to the healed man, " Give God the glory. We know that this man is a sinner." The healed man is righteously indignant because of the second examination at the hands of the rulers. He stands four-square

against every wind of opposition and says of Jesus, "Whether he be a sinner I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Nothing could shake his faith in the fact of a divine healing. The Jews rather childishly repeat the former questions in their re-examination of the man, whose patience by this time is exhausted. Then he says, "I told you even now and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? Would ye also become his disciples? Are you making earnest inquiries in order to find out the truth?" They meet his question with reviling and reaffirm their loyalty to Moses. He presses upon them the fact that he had an experience that had never been enjoyed by anyone before, and that this was produced by a man whom they called a sinner, but whom he thought to have come from God. He has clearer ideas of the ethics of the situation than the Jews, who angrily charge him with being altogether born in sin and yet having the audacity to argue with them and to teach them about the ways of God. Madly and vehemently they cast him out of the synagogue. They could not manipulate him, intimidate him or answer his logic, but they could excommunicate him, and this they did with violent madness.

Jesus heard how the healed man had been turned out of the synagogue and, finding him in the multitude, said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And as an earnest inquirer the man asked, "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Then Jesus revealed himself to him in these words, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." And

he said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him. Thus, with faith and reverence, the blind man accepts Jesus as the Son of God and finds in him more than a compensation for what he has lost by being turned out of the synagogue.

9. The Shepherd of His People, John 10:1-21.

Very appropriately does the parable of the sheepfold and the shepherd follow the excommunication of the blind man from the synagogue and his reception of Christ as the Son of God and reception by Christ as one of his flock. Jesus claims to be both the door and the shepherd—"I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved. He shall go in and go out and shall find pasture." There shall be salvation, liberty and nourishment. He declares himself to be the good shepherd and says, "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep." Perhaps in the thief that comes not but that he may kill, steal and destroy, and in the hireling who flees in the time of danger, Jesus intends to portray some of the faithless religious leaders of his day. Again he says, "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine own and mine own know me. Even as the Father knoweth me, I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." Thus the purpose of the Good Shepherd is to give us life through his atoning death.

The heart of Christ reaches out beyond the Jewish people, so he says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. They also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice and they shall be one flock, one shep-

herd." One shepherd—Jesus, who laid down his life for us; one flock—all who hear his voice and follow him, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free.

II. Jesus Enlarges His Programme for Judea

Having considered important events that took place in Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles and immediately afterwards, and recorded by John only, we now pass on to the consideration of some events which probably occurred in Judea and are given by Luke only. However, some of these works and words of Jesus are similar to those occurring in his Galilean ministry, and given by Matthew and Mark.

1. Christ sends forth seventy disciples, Luke 10:1-24.

These disciples are sent out in pairs to go before his face into the various cities he proposed to enter. The condition in Judea at this time is similar to that in Galilee when he appointed the twelve—"The harvest is plenteous; the labourers are few," and the remedy for the situation is prayer to the Lord of the harvest. These seventy are sent forth in the midst of a hostile environment and with simple equipment. They are to accept voluntary hospitality and to preach that the kingdom of God is at hand.

When the seventy return from their labours, they express great joy because they are enabled to cast out demons in the name of Christ. He tells them, however, that their supreme privilege is not in a miraculous ministry but in having their names written in heaven. In that same hour Jesus rejoices that his Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, vouchsafes spiritual experi-

ence to those that are humble in heart rather than to the worldly wise. Then, turning to his disciples, he pronounces a blessing upon them for seeing and hearing things that had been hid from prophets and kings during past generations.

2. Jesus shows who are our real neighbours, Luke 10:25-37.

Somewhere in Judea Jesus gives the parable of the good Samaritan in reply to a lawyer who seeks to ensnare him by asking how he may inherit eternal life. Jesus refers him to the law, with which he ought to be acquainted, and receives the answer that love to God and love to one's neighbour are the main requirements of the Mosaic legislation. But, desiring to justify himself, the lawyer asks, " And who is my neighbour? " In reply to this question Jesus speaks the memorable parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest, or high church official, and the Levite, an ordinary church member, see the unfortunate victim of thieves and robbers, but, with cold indifference, pass by on the other side of the road; while a Samaritan, from whom you would scarcely expect deeds of mercy, likewise saw the man who had suffered at the hands of the thieves and draws near in compassion, and with his own hands brings relief. He also pays the man's hotel bill and makes provision for his expenses until full recovery. Significantly Christ asks: " Which of these three thinkest thou *proved neighbour* to him that fell among robbers? " The lawyer replies, " He that showed mercy on him," and Jesus says unto him, " Go thou and do likewise."

3. Jesus becomes a guest in the home of his friends at Bethany, Luke 10:38-42.

We next note a beautiful home scene at Bethany, near Jerusalem, where Jesus is the guest of Martha and Mary. Evidently Martha was the dominant spirit in that household. She was pre-eminently a business woman. This home became the favourite retreat of Jesus during his closing ministry. Martha had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and heard his words. Martha was distracted by the many household duties involved in preparing the family dinner. Mary gave her time and attention to Jesus until Martha became nervously critical and appealed to Jesus for relief and asked him to send Mary to her assistance. Jesus perceived the tense situation, and the anxiety of Martha to prepare a feast for her honoured guest, and answered her question with tender rebuke, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things for the family meal, but a few things are needful, even one. Just a simple dinner is all that we should care to have, and not a feast of good things which you are so anxious to prepare. It is better to be like Mary and learn from me than to consume your energies in preparing a sumptuous meal."

4. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, Luke 11:1-13.

While continuing his journey in Galilee, Jesus gives a model of prayer and encourages his disciples to pray definitely and unceasingly. The disciples were so impressed with the manner and words of Jesus in his praying that one of them, at the close of the season of private prayer, said unto him, "Lord, teach us to

pray even as John also taught his disciples." The contrast between the praying of Jesus and that of the disciples was evidently impressive. It is to their credit, however, that they perceived the difference and wanted to learn the holy art of prayer. Jesus gives in substance what is recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. Evidently *no special form of prayer* is intended to be used on all occasions, because the words of the prayer given by Matthew and Luke are not identical, though the underlying spirit and principal elements of prayer are the same. Jesus encourages prayer by presenting the model, by giving a parable of a friend in need, by a threefold exhortation, a threefold promise and a threefold statement of experience (Luke 11:9, 10), and furthermore, by an illustration from human relations. " If earthly fathers, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give good things, even the Holy Spirit, to them that ask him? "

5. Jesus casts out demons by the finger of God, Luke 11:14-36.

Jesus casts out demons by the finger of God and arouses afresh the hostility of the Jewish leaders, who say that by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, casteth he out demons. Jesus refutes their foolish charge from the standpoint of common sense, for a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. If Satan be divided against himself, his kingdom cannot stand. Second, from the standpoint of the Pharisees' own course of action. The Pharisees claimed to cast out demons. If Jesus did so by the power of Beelzebub,

the intimation is that perhaps their own sons cast out by the same power, which of course they vehemently denied. Third, from the practise of military art. A man who enters a house to destroy its contents must be stronger than the man on the inside of the house protecting his goods. Even so Jesus must be mightier than Satan in order to cast out demons.

Doubtless impressed by the demolishing words of Jesus, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice and said, " Blessings on the mother of such a son as this! How fortunate she is! " But Jesus said, " Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." Obedience to God is superior to all earthly relationships.

Jesus taught the multitudes that their generation had religious opportunities, and therefore responsibilities, not accorded to the people living in the old dispensation. His preaching was greater than that of Jonah; his wisdom was superior to that of Solomon; hence, their responsibility was weightier than that of the Ninevites, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and that of the Queen of the South who travelled far to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

6. Jesus takes breakfast in the home of a critical Pharisee, Luke 11:37-54.

Jesus takes breakfast in the home of a critical Pharisee and pronounces a series of woes upon the Jewish rulers. A woe upon the Pharisees—first, for their ritualism—tithing little things but passing over judgment and the love of God; second, for their pride in synagogue and market places; third, for their hypocrisy

symbolized by invisible tombs over which men walked, unconscious of their presence; fourth, for the oppression of the lawyers or religious teachers who burdened others with duties they themselves would not perform; fifth, for the persecution which befell the prophets and will be continued with Christ and the apostles; sixth, for the iniquity of the religious teachers in taking away the key to the door of knowledge, refusing to enter themselves and not permitting others to do so. This series of woes stirred the Scribes and Pharisees to vehement hostility and determination to watch him closely that they might provoke him to say something that would justify them in his arrest.

7. Jesus speaks to his disciples and many thousands of the multitude on vital themes, Luke 12.

First—hypocrisy. In the presence of the multitude Jesus warns his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, and teaches them not to fear man, who at most can kill only the body, but to fear God, who has power over both soul and body (1–12).

Second—covetousness. A man from the crowd asked Jesus to settle a family dispute about property, saying, "Master, bid my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus reads the man's heart at once and says, "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesses." Then, by the parable of the rich but godless farmer, he teaches the importance of serving God and being ready for the final summons (13–21).

Third—worldly anxieties. Jesus desired his followers to constitute an *anti-worry association.* They were not to mar the peace of life by corroding cares and nervous anxieties about the future. They were urged to consider the ravens and the lilies, and to fear not the coming of crushing evils, but to seek first the kingdom of God, and trust him to supply all of their needs (22–34).

Fourth—watchfulness. Jesus urges his people to be watchful and always ready for the coming of their Lord. They are to be like servants who look for the return of their lord from the marriage feast—" Be ye also ready, for in the hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." Peter is anxious to know the application of the parable, and Jesus warns against presuming on the mercy of God and misinterpreting the delay of retributive justice. He teaches that knowledge will determine the degree of responsibility and punishment (36–48).

Fifth—Christ's mission. He says, " Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? " That is, peace at any price. He came to cast a fire upon the earth; to teach those principles of moral distinction and spiritual discernment that will divide even families. Loyalty to Jesus Christ is superior to loyalty to any earthly relative. The family of believers has a stronger tie binding them together than has the family entered by natural birth (49–53).

Sixth—spiritual vision. Jesus tells the multitude that they can forecast the weather by certain signs in nature, but seem to be blind to the signs of the times.

Men ought to be as good judges of human nature and perceive as readily the signs of providence as they are prudent observers of natural phenomena. We should have our eyes open to the events in human life, and not simply behold the passing clouds (54–59).

8. Jesus teaches that all must repent or perish and refers to two current tragedies to emphasize his doctrine, Luke 13:1-9.

Some persons came to Jesus and told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices and doubtless intimated that surely these victims of Pilate's wicked rage were doomed to everlasting despair. But Jesus does not determine destiny by a tragic death, but by the condition of the heart. The Tower of Siloam, probably at one stage of its construction, fell and killed eighteen of the workmen. Some of Christ's hearers thought that these unfortunate victims were great sinners or they would not have suffered such a horrible death. Jesus turns the mind of the people away from the victims of these two tragedies and twice repeats the words, "Nay, but except *ye repent* ye shall all likewise perish." Repentance, therefore, in one and all, irrespective of religious opportunities or professions, is the only condition of forgiveness and life everlasting. Tragedies are not tokens of divine vengeance.

In this connection Jesus utters the parable of the barren fig tree, showing that the God of justice is a God of love, and also that the God of love is a God of justice. The owner of the fig tree had a right to expect fruit, which for three successive years it failed to bear.

He suggested to the vine-dresser that the tree be cut down as being not only fruitless but as occupying ground which might produce fruit on other trees. The vine-dresser makes a suggestion in which the owner of the vineyard acquiesces, "Give the tree another chance. I will do all I can to make it fruitful. If it does not respond to my treatment, then cut it down." The Lord is merciful, but the day of grace will have its sunset. "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

9. Jesus heals a crippled woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Luke 13:11-18.

While Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day, there appeared a woman in the audience who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. She was bowed together and could in no wise lift herself up. She was evidently brought to the synagogue by her friends, who believed that Jesus would perform the cure. When Jesus saw her he laid his hands upon her in tenderness and power, saying, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." Instead of rejoicing at the cure, the ruler of the synagogue was moved with indignation because Jesus healed on the Sabbath day and gruffly murmured, saying that men ought to come to be healed during the six days of the week and not on the Sabbath. Jesus hurled at him one of his effective missiles, saying, "Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to water? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen

years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?" By this pointed question the enemies were put to silent shame and the multitude made to rejoice at the gracious miracle of healing.

III. Jesus Returns to Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication, Which Took Place the Latter Part of December, John 10:22-39

John alone gives us an account of the events of this visit. While walking in Solomon's porch the Jews say unto Jesus, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly."

The only reason they were in suspense was because they refused to believe what Jesus had said and done. Hence, he replies, "I told you and ye believe not. The works I do in my Father's name bear witness of me." He shows clearly that the reason they do not accept him is not because he has not given sufficient evidence, but because they have not the right spirit. They are not his sheep, though they claim to be. He says pointedly, "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish and no one shall ever snatch them out of my hand. My Father which hath given them unto me is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Being unable to answer his words by argument, the Jews take up stones again to stone him, and Jesus replies, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do them, though

ye believe not me, believe the works that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father." They seek again to arrest him, but he quietly goes forth out of their hands because his hour is not yet come.

IV. Jesus Enters Upon His Later Perean Ministry

This ministry of Jesus most likely includes the period from the feast of dedication, December A. D. 29, to the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem in A. D. 30, or some three and a half months. The first item of interest in this period is the withdrawal of Jesus from Jerusalem to Bethany beyond Jordan, where John was at the first baptizing. Jesus is seeking a place of quiet retirement after the storm of indignation which beat upon him at Jerusalem. In Christ's retreat at Bethany many come to him and believe on him there. This is largely due to the fact that John the Baptist, though performing no miracle, gave an accurate and impressive description of Jesus.

Leaving his retirement at Bethany in Perea, Jesus journeys toward Jerusalem and teaches important truths about his ministry and the kingdom of God.

1. Jesus urges personal salvation, Luke 13:22-35.

Sometime during his journey to Jerusalem one of the auditors asks Jesus, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He does not answer by either "yes" or "no," but does something far better and replies, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many I say unto you shall seek to enter in and shall not be

able." We need not worry over the number to be saved; our first concern should be our own personal salvation.

About this time there is an effort made either to save Jesus from the wiles of the foxy Herod or to get rid of him by reporting Herod's attitude of hostility. Jesus calmly states that he would not swerve through cowardice or regard for personal safety, but would go straight forward with his work day by day until the end comes. There is pathos in his lamentation over Jerusalem, whose record of persecution would be crowned by the greatest tragedy when she would put Jesus to death and bring upon herself an unspeakable desolation.

2. Jesus teaches at a breakfast table, Luke 14:1-24.

While eating breakfast in the home of a ruler of the Pharisees, Jesus heals a man with dropsy, for which he is severely criticized in thought, though not in speech, for Jesus silences his opposers by asking whether it is right to heal on the Sabbath day or not, and by appealing to the practise of the Pharisees themselves in rescuing a domestic animal from a dangerous situation on the Sabbath.

The first lesson at the breakfast table is one of *helpfulness,* and spoken especially to the lawyers and Pharisees. *The second lesson* is directed primarily to the guests and stresses the beautiful grace of *humility*. *The third lesson* is directed primarily to the host and emphasizes unselfish *hospitality*. *The fourth lesson* is on the Gospel feast, or spiritual satisfaction, and is occasioned by a suggestive remark made by one of the

guests—"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." From this expression Jesus takes occasion to deliver the parable of the great supper, describing how the invitations were rejected, but also how the feast was finally furnished with guests. He thus portrays the Gospel feast, the invitations extended, the unnatural rejection by invited guests, and the final success of the Gospel enterprise.

3. Jesus demands self-denial in his followers, Luke 14:25-35.

While observing the great crowds that followed him, Jesus teaches them the importance of counting the cost of true discipleship. He demands absolute loyalty and supreme devotion. His claims are superior to those of any earthly relationship—father, mother, wife, child, or even a man's own temporal life. He warns against impulsive and thoughtless discipleship by speaking two parables, one drawn from architectural life—the builder of a tower who began the enterprise but was unable to finish; and another drawn from military life—the leader of a great army rashly attacking a superior force and coming to defeat. Jesus thus emphasizes the importance of rational foresight and adequate insight on the part of his followers.

4. Jesus defends his attitude toward sinners in three parables, Luke 15.

Jesus gladly welcomes sinners, for which, however, the Pharisees and Scribes murmur against him with a strange hostility. The charge brought against him by the Pharisees and scribes has become his glory: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." In jus-

tification of his course he delivers three great parables: first, the lost sheep—emphasizing possession and attachment of life; second, the lost coin—emphasizing ownership and commercial value; third, the lost son—emphasizing kinship and supreme affection. In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin it is to be observed that the owner seeks diligently *until the lost is found.* In the case of the lost son we note that he seeks the father's house, but the father is even more anxious to welcome his returning son than the son is to reach the home of his childhood. We may trace the history of the lost son as follows: separation, dissipation, meditation, resolution, execution, restoration and celebration. In the attitude of the elder brother the Pharisees and Scribes could not fail to see a delineation of their own spirit and attitude toward the publicans and sinners.

5. Jesus illustrates the doctrine of stewardship in three parables, Luke 16:1-17:10.

The first one is *the parable of the unjust steward* and is addressed to the disciples. This parable is often misunderstood. The only point to be commended in the unjust steward is his personal and selfish foresight in making a discount in the settlement of debts due his lord, and though injuring his lord he would ingratiate himself with the creditors after he had been driven from his office through dishonest dealings. He used money in a shrewd, worldly way for personal ends. How much more, then, should righteous stewards use their means for the noblest purposes (Luke 16:1-13).

Second, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was

directed especially to the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, and upon hearing what he had said to the disciples indulged in cheap and hostile scoffing. In this parable we have three significant contrasts—in life, in death, in eternity. Destiny is fixed at death. Earthly inequalities are adjusted on the principle of justice. An impassable chasm makes separation permanent and communication impossible. Those lost at death cannot be saved, nor the saved lost, nor go on errands of mercy to the doomed, nor return to earth to proclaim the Gospel. The rich man was not lost because he was rich nor Lazarus saved because he was poor, for Lazarus went from the gate of a rich man on earth to the bosom of a rich man in eternity. With reference to character and destiny, the testimony of Moses and the prophets is *sufficient;* when we add the testimony of Christ and the apostles, the testimony is *all-sufficient.* We need no messengers from the shadowy world of death; we need not more evidence concerning the future, but more willingness to receive the testimony we already have.

Third, *the parable of the unprofitable servant* was spoken to the disciples. Jesus teaches that his disciples, like bond-servants, cannot claim any special reward for doing their duty. There are no works of supererogation to put down to our account over and above our blood-bought obligations to Jesus Christ. As labourers of the Lord we cannot claim any special bonus, but with the spirit of humility we may say that we are unprofitable bond-servants, for we have done only that which it was our duty to do.

6. Jesus returns to Bethany near Jerusalem, where he raises Lazarus from the dead, John 11.

Christ's Perean ministry is interrupted by the news that Lazarus is sick unto death. Sickness had invaded the little family at Bethany, consisting of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. The sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Jesus waits two days before leaving for Judea, where the people had recently sought to stone him. The disciples seek to dissuade him from returning, but he is determined to go straight forward in life's duties until the setting of the sun. He at first says that Lazarus is *asleep,* using his favourite euphemism for death. Upon drawing near to Bethany he is met first by Martha, who exclaims, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." This is the wail of despair; but there is a ray of hope in what she says next—"And even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, he will give thee." Jesus strengthens her faith and brightens her hope by saying, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he die yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Then Martha makes the good confession, "Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world." After making this noble confession she arises quickly and calls her sister, who immediately responds and comes where Jesus and Martha had their private interview. Mary utters Martha's despairing cry, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Then she

broke into a flood of tears. The Jews, or hired mourners, join with her, causing Jesus to groan with deepest sorrow and sympathy. On the way to the tomb Jesus gives way to his feelings of tender love and grief. In recording his experience the evangelist says, "Jesus wept." On reaching the tomb, he commands the stone to be taken away, lifts up his eyes and heart in thanksgiving to God for answering prayer, and with a loud, triumphant voice says, "Lazarus, come forth." The soul returns to the lifeless body, and Lazarus comes forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes, while his face is wrapped with a napkin. With the words of Jesus, "Loose him and let him go," this matchless narrative of pathos and power is brought to a close.

The effect of the raising of Lazarus *on the people* was to lead some to believe on Jesus and to induce others to join the enemies and report to the Pharisees; the *effect on the Sanhedrin* was the calling of a meeting of the council and a discussion of what steps they should take to stop the tide of popularity which was flowing toward Jesus; the *effect on the movement of* Jesus was to induce him to leave the vicinity of Jerusalem and to go into the sparsely settled country in northern Judea to a city called Ephraim, and there tarry for a season in company with his disciples.

V. Jesus Enters Upon His Last Journey to Jerusalem by Way of Samaria and Galilee

Terminating the quietude of his retreat with his disciples, Jesus left Ephraim and journeyed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee, crossed the River Jor-

dan, joined the caravan which travelled down the river on its eastern bank to Jericho and re-crossed it on the way to Jerusalem.

1. Jesus heals ten lepers, who cry unto him for mercy, Luke 17:11-21.

Jesus directed the healed lepers to go to the priest, whose duty it was to pass judgment upon the reality of a leper's cure. As they went, in obedience to Christ's command, they were cleansed. Nine went on their way to the priest, but one returned to Jesus, falling at his feet with gratitude. The question of Jesus has been ringing down the centuries—"Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" The one who returned to give glory to God was a stranger, a Samaritan. Thus the highest expressions of spiritual experience and gratitude often come from unexpected sources.

2. Jesus explains what he means by the kingdom of God, Luke 17:22-37.

In reply to a question asked by the Pharisees *concerning the coming of the kingdom of God,* Jesus tells them plainly that the kingdom of God does not come with military pomp and splendour; not with spectacular observances, but in a quiet and ofttimes undiscernible but profound and transforming power; for the kingdom of God is among you as a spiritual power and in you as a personal experience. Then unto his disciples Jesus gives special instruction, lest they be deceived by false teaching concerning the outward demonstrations of the kingdom of God. He says that the affairs of human life in social and business relations

will continue with practical uniformity until the Son of man returns to earth. In that day or in that night there shall be a separation of small groups, even of those in the same family. This shall take place when providential conditions are ripe for the coming of the Lord—" For where the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

3. Jesus teaches the importance of perseverance and humility in prayer, Luke 18:1-14.

Importunity in prayer is taught by the parable of the unjust judge who, though neither fearing God nor regarding man, decided on the case so urgently presented by one of his clients who, though she was only a widow, yet by her tireless persistence won the victory. How much more will the righteous God hear the prayers of his people?

Humility in prayer is illustrated and enforced by the worship of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee engaged in a soliloquy instead of a prayer. He *prayed with himself,* and in his praying boasted of his own character and of his superiority to even the publican. The publican, feeling the weight of his sins, smote upon his breast and really prayed, saying, " God be merciful to me, the sinner." The prayer of the Pharisee was rejected; the prayer of the publican accepted.

4. Jesus expresses himself on the question of divorce, Mark 10:1-12; Matthew 19:1-12.

While going from Galilee through Perea on his way to Jerusalem, the Pharisees, in their effort to ensnare Jesus, asked him a perplexing *question concerning*

divorce. Not only the spiritual life of prayer but the social life of the family are important factors in the kingdom of God. In answer to the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause (or for any cause that a man may deem sufficient)?" Jesus teaches clearly that from original creation God intended that there should be one man and one woman living in marriage relation. He made only one woman for Adam. It is true that Moses, because of the hardness of the human heart, suffered separation of man and wife, and in protection of a woman's character and reputation required a writing of divorcement. Only natural death, or that which is worse—the violation of the purity of the marriage relation—can dissolve the nuptial tie. It is not necessary to marry, but when once the bond is formed it is imperative that it continue until broken by sin or death.

5. Christ blesses little children and illustrates the nature of the kingdom of God, Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.

Somewhere in Perea *Christ blessed little children* who were brought to him that he should lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples, not appreciating Christ's attitude toward children, nor the interruption produced by their presence, were moved with indignation; but Jesus, in happy contrast with their feeling, said, "Suffer little children to come unto me; forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child (receives it), shall in no wise enter therein. Then he took them in his arms

and blessed them, laying his hands on them, and departed thence."

6. Christ teaches the rich young ruler the way of life, Mark 10:17-31; Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30.

While Jesus was continuing his journey to Jerusalem a rich young ruler ran to him in earnestness and knelt before him in humility, asking the great question, "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He had a superficial view of goodness, so Christ asked, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." He probes the heart of the inquirer by saying, "Thou knowest the commandments," and repeats those pertaining to life, purity, property, truth, honesty and home. The young man replies, "Master, all these things have I observed from my youth; what lack I yet?" There was something attractive and appealing in the young man, and Jesus, looking upon him, loved him and said, "One thing thou lackest—go sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven, and come and follow me." But his countenance fell in grievous disappointment, and he went away exceedingly sorrowful, for he was very rich. Thus the curtain drops on the tragedy of "the great refusal." With the blessings of youth, riches and position, the young man failed to stand the acid test of the absolute surrender of everything to Jesus Christ. He rejected the sovereignty of Christ for the sovereignty of wealth.

As the young man leaves Jesus and hope behind, Christ impresses the lesson of "the great refusal"

upon his disciples and says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." This was a new doctrine to the disciples, who were brought up in the belief that riches are a sign of heavenly approval. Hence, they ask in surprise, "Who, then, can be saved?" and receive the reply, "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God."

Peter, true to his nature, and with some selfishness still lingering in his soul, speaks out, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee! What, then, shall we have?" The rich young ruler wanted to *keep* what he had; Peter desires to *secure* more than he possesses. Jesus replies that those who have forsaken all to follow him shall receive a hundredfold now, in the present time, but with persecutions, and if faithful shall, in the world to come, receive life eternal.

7. Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a householder who wanted to secure good labourers for his vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16.

In the early morning a householder employed some labourers for a penny a day—a definite contract. At the third, at the sixth and at the ninth hours he employed others also. When evening came for settlement, the lord of the vineyard gave directions for the labourers to be paid in the inverse order of their employment. The one engaged at the eleventh hour received a penny, and the one that was employed at the opening of the day likewise received a penny, but murmured that he had received no more, although he had made a specific bargain for that amount. He enters a

severe complaint and receives the reply, " Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take up that which is thine and go thy way. It is my will to give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Or is thine eye evil because I am good? " Christ is never unjust to any, but is exceedingly merciful to some. God has a sovereign right to bestow the rewards of his kingdom upon whomsoever he will. Oft-times the last entering his service are first in the fine spirit of labour and first in reward. It is not the time of day employed but fidelity to the task that determines the reward.

8. Still facing Jerusalem, Jesus again foretells to the disciples the manner of his approaching death and the fact of his resurrectioln, Mark 10:32-34; Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34.

Jesus now goes more into detail than in his previous teaching on the same subject, saying, " Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles, and they shall mock him and shall spit upon him and shall scourge him and shall kill him, and after three days he shall rise again." He teaches that the Gentiles, or the Romans, shall crucify him, after the vilest imaginable treatment and scourging, but that on the third day he shall come forth victor over death and the grave. He never foretells his death without coupling the sad prophecy with the glorious promise of his resurrection.

9. Jesus rebukes the selfish ambition of James and John and points out the path to greatness, Mark 10:35-45; Matthew 20:20-28.

In an opposite spirit shown by Jesus on this occasion is the one manifested by James and John and their mother, who come to Jesus making special requests that the two brothers receive positions of honour in the kingdom of God which they thought Jesus would soon inaugurate in Jerusalem. Naturally the mother was ambitious for her sons, but the spirit displayed was exceedingly selfish and worldly. They did not understand the nature of the kingdom nor the cost of promotion in its holy work. Jesus probes their hearts with a pointed question, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" That is, "Are ye able to pass through the same experiences of disappointment and suffering and overwhelming grief that await me?" With the stirrings of heroic manhood they respond, "We are able." Jesus replies that they shall indeed share the severe ordeals through which he will pass, but as to the positions of honour in his kingdom, they are to be given according to the foreordained plan of God and not according to the requests of the mother and her sons. Naturally, when the ten heard of the incident they were moved with indignation at the determined effort of James and John to secure first positions in the kingdom of heaven. Whereupon Jesus teaches the fundamental principle of service and promotion. According to civil government there are official gradations, but in the kingdom of God the only

law of promotion is unselfish service. Jesus Christ himself set the supreme example and came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. In the kingdom of heaven, he who renders the greatest service, without any thought of self, attains the highest position and receives the greatest reward.

10. Jesus heals blind Bartimæus and his companion near Jericho, Mark 10:46-52; Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43.

As Jesus and the disciples, with a great multitude on their way to Jerusalem, draw nigh unto Jericho, blind Bartimæus and his companion hear the tramp of the thousands of pilgrims, and, upon inquiry, learn that Jesus is near; and, crying for mercy, hear from his lips the words of welcome. Jesus halts the great multitude to show mercy to a poor, blind beggar by the wayside. Being called, the blind man casts away his garment, rushes into the presence of Jesus, who, moved with compassion, touches his eyes, saying, "Receive thy sight," and immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God.

11. Jesus visits Zacchæus and saves his household, Luke 19:1-10.

As Jesus was passing through Jericho, he arrested the attention of Zacchæus, a man small of stature, great in wealth and eager in soul. Going in advance of the multitude, he climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, and to his joyful surprise Christ, passing under the tree, instantly stopped and looked up intently at Zacchæus, saying, "Make haste and come down, for

to-day I must abide at thy house." With haste and joy Zacchæus received Jesus into his home and that day salvation came to him and to his house. Zacchæus instantly formed a new resolution outlining his future conduct, saying, " Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wrongfully exacted anything of any man I restore it fourfold." The pure type of Christianity not only makes the soul right with God but the life four-square in its dealings with our fellow-men. The salvation that came to Zacchæus and his household was but an illustration of the great mission of Jesus which he declared on this occasion, " For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

12. Jesus speaks the parable of the pounds and continues his journey to Jerusalem, Luke 19:11-28.

Because Jesus was drawing near to Jerusalem, and because many thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear and would perhaps be inaugurated in a spectacular manner at the approaching Passover, Jesus spake a parable full of instruction and warning and designed to check the rising enthusiasm to make him king. The parable of the nobleman, or of the pounds, is similar to the parable of the talents, but differs in several respects. The number of talents bestowed upon the servants varied, while one pound was given to each servant. But the doctrine of faithfulness is the supreme teaching in each parable. Jesus says, in substance: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a nobleman who went into a far country to receive unto himself a kingdom and to return. He delivered unto

ten servants ten pounds and commanded them to trade therewith until he should return. The nobleman, having received his kingdom, returned and called his servants to account. The first one reported that his pound had gained ten pounds more and received the commendation and promotion, "Well done, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Similarly the faithful servant, whose pound had gained five pounds, was given authority over five cities. But another servant, whose pound was not used in the market but laid up in a napkin, made his report not in gladness of heart but in the spirit of censure. The successful servants stated modestly and accurately what they had done, but the servant who failed to do his duty tried to lay his failure upon his lord, and received the merited rebuke, "According to your own words you shall be judged; on the supposition that what you say is true—that I am a hard master, and unjust in my demands, you ought to have deposited my money in a bank, if you were afraid to trade with it in a market, then upon my return I would at least receive the original principal and the usual legal rate of interest." So the pound was taken from him who failed to improve it and given to the faithful and efficient servant whose one pound had gained ten pounds. For he that hath and improves what he hath shall receive the more; while he who hath and fails to improve what he hath shall forfeit what he has received.

CHAPTER VII

THE PERIOD OF CULMINATION—JESUS CLOSING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

I. The Events of Friday Afternoon
   1. Jesus provokes discussion as to his presence at the feast
      a. Multitudes attend the Passover
      b. Much speculation as to whether Jesus would attend or not
   2. Jesus arrives at Bethany near Jerusalem
      a. Jesus reaches Bethany six days before the Passover
      b. The Sanhedrin plots the death of Lazarus
      c. No record of Jesus' last Sabbath before the crucifixion

II. The Events of Sunday—a Day of Messianic Demonstration, or a Day of Triumph
   1. Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace
      a. Jesus' conception of the Messiah contrasted with that of contemporary Jewish rulers
      b. Jesus prepares for and makes his triumphal entry
      c. The enthusiasm of the multitude arouses the chagrin of the Pharisees
   2. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem as a compassionate Saviour
   3. Jesus heals the blind and lame in the Temple and rebukes the carping rulers

III. The Events of Monday—a Day of Authority and Messianic Power
   1. Jesus blasts the barren fig tree
   2. Jesus cleanses the Temple the second time
   3. Jesus teaches that self-sacrifice is the supreme law of life
      a. Some Greeks interview Jesus
      b. Jesus teaches self-sacrifice is the supreme law of life
      c. Jesus prays and God answers audibly from heaven
      d. The multitude misunderstands Jesus, stumbling at the Cross
      e. Many believe on Jesus, but are cowered by the threats of the Pharisees
      f. Jesus declares that belief in him is equivalent to belief in God

IV. The Events of Tuesday—a Day of Questions, a Day of Controversy
1. Jesus teaches a lesson of faith from the withered fig tree
   a. A busy day
   b. The last six days spent in Jerusalem
   c. Summary statement of Luke about the last week of Jesus' public ministry
   d. Jesus teaches a lesson of faith from the withered fig tree
2. Jesus answers a series of perplexing questions
   a. A rabbinical question, a demand for Jesus' authority
      (1) Jesus replies by a counter question and places his opponents in a dilemma
      (2) He makes further reply in three parables—the Two Sons, the Wicked Husbandmen, the Marriage Feast of the King's Son
   b. A political question of tribute to Cæsar
   c. A theological question, the resurrection of the body
   d. A legal question, the greatest commandment
3. Jesus crushes his enemies by propounding a Messianic question
4. Jesus delivers his last public discourse in the court of the Temple, uttering seven woes against the Pharisees
   a. The first woe because they shut the door of the kingdom
   b. The second woe because they make matters worse by proselyting
   c. The third woe because they make trifling and superficial distinctions
   d. The fourth woe because they exalt the forms of religion above its essential practices
   e. The fifth woe because they emphasize outward cleansing at the expense of inward purity
   f. The sixth woe because they are like whitewashed tombs, hypocritical
   g. The seventh woe because they manifest kinship to those of former days who killed the prophets
5. Jesus shows his deep interest in how people contribute to the Temple treasury
   a. Jesus observes and commends the poor widow's generous gift
   b. Jesus bids farewell to Jerusalem

CHAPTER VII

THE PERIOD OF CULMINATION—CHRIST CLOSING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

CHRIST's last public ministry in Jerusalem extended from Friday before the crucifixion to Tuesday of Passion Week, probably in the spring of A. D. 30. Events converge toward the tragic end, and Jesus multiplies his activities. The air is tense and electric.

I. THE EVENTS OF FRIDAY AFTERNOON

1. Jesus provokes discussion as to his presence at the feast, John 11:55-57.

The passover of the Jews was largely attended. It is estimated that at this particular passover between two and three million people gathered in Jerusalem from various quarters of the globe. Many would come in advance of the feast in order to perform the necessary ceremonies of purification preparatory to its traditional celebration.

The subject of supreme interest and conversation related to the presence of Jesus. The question was on many lips, "What think ye? Do ye believe that he is coming to the feast? Will he brave the opposition of the Pharisees and be present, or will he remain away and thwart their purposes of violence?" The discussion was all the more fervent and vigorous

because the chief priests and Pharisees had issued a mandate for anyone knowing of the presence of Jesus to give the information that would lead to his arrest.

2. Jesus arrives at Bethany near Jerusalem, John 12:1, 9-11.

Six days before the passover, or Friday afternoon preceding the crucifixion, Jesus and his disciples reach Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. News of his arrival spreads rapidly, and multitudes are drawn to the little village, not only because of the presence of Jesus but also because of Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead and is now living in his former home.

Lazarus is a concrete illustration of the power of Christ over life and death. The Sanhedrin takes formal action to have Lazarus also put to death, because that by reason of him (that is, his conquest over death through Christ), many of the Jews are led to believe in Jesus. A strange counsel indeed. Lazarus had died once, and by the power of Christ had come forth conqueror of death. If he were put to death he would rise again, if such were the will of God.

We have no record of Christ's movement on Saturday—the Jewish Sabbath. Perhaps Jesus and his disciples remained in the quiet haven of their Bethany home while the storm of opposition raged without. It is cheering for him to spend his last Sabbath in this paradise of love while the pandemonium of hate envelops Jerusalem.

II. The Events of Sunday—a Day of Messianic Demonstration, or the Day of Triumph

1. Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace, Mark 11:1-11; Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19.

Jesus makes his final appeal to Jerusalem—the city of his love; the city of his death; the city of his resurrection.

Jesus and the rulers differ fundamentally in their conception of the Jewish Messiah. The rulers thought that he would reign over a kingdom that would conquer the Roman Empire, that he would be a victorious general leading his armies to worldly victories. But Jesus is King of the hearts of men and gains his victories by the sword of the Spirit and not the sword of blood.

Jesus gives definite directions for the preparation of his triumphal entry. He tells two of his disciples where to find the ass on which he would ride in peaceful triumph. The little details of preparation and progress are all in the divine plan. The ass is secured —one on which man never sat, and therefore fit for royalty. Jesus rides not upon a horse, a symbol of war, but upon an ass, a symbol of peace. The enthusiastic multitude, "for the most part" but not altogether, throw garments in the way and gather olive and palm branches and cast them into the road, over which Jesus is to travel, and vociferously join in a great Messianic demonstration.

A multitude had followed Jesus and the disciples from Bethany, and another crowd had started from

Jerusalem to Bethany, and, meeting the incoming procession, retraced their steps. So the crowd preceding and the crowd following Jesus—two vast multitudes—cry: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Such a demonstration greatly astonished and almost paralyzed the Pharisees, who said among themselves, "Behold how ye prevail nothing. Lo, the world has gone after him!" In their consternation the various groups of Pharisees seek to evade the responsibility of their failure to manipulate the people, and say, "Behold how *ye* prevail nothing" instead of confessing the fact that *we* have failed to *control* the multitudes.

Christ's disciples are especially enthusiastic in their praise, saying, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Whereupon some of the Pharisees ask Jesus to rebuke them, to which he replies, "I tell you that if these shall hold their peace the stones will cry out."

2. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem as a compassionate Saviour, Luke 19:41-44.

As Jesus draws near the city, at perhaps the turn of the road where Jerusalem comes into view, his mind sweeps over the pages of history and looks into the tragic future, and he weeps, as only the Son of man could weep, over the impending doom. He says, with inexpressible pathos, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." Never did even Christ crowd more pathos and love and disappointment into one brief exclamation than we find in

these words. Jerusalem had sinned away its day of opportunity, and now in blindness of heart the city and the nation travel in darkness to destruction.

3. Jesus heals the blind and lame in the temple and rebukes the carping rulers, Matthew 21:10-17.

The city is stirred from centre to circumference by the arrival of Jesus in Messianic demonstration. As we would naturally expect, he goes to the temple and views the whole situation, revolving in his mind what he will do on the morrow (Monday). He never, however, fails to improve an opportunity for doing good. The blind and the lame come to him in the temple, and he gives the healing touch and speaks the restoring word. The children, with glad hearts and vigorous voices, cry out in the temple: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" In marked contrast with the enthusiasm of the children is the intense indignation of the chief priests and scribes, who rebuke both Jesus and the children by the pointed question, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" And Jesus saith unto them: "Yea, did ye never read (a keen rebuke; being teachers they ought to know), 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise'?"

Jesus now comes forth from the city to Bethany, the retreat of his Jerusalem ministry and the sanctuary of his soul during the last few days of his public activities.

III. The Events of Monday—a Day of Authority and Messianic Power

1. Jesus blasts the barren fig tree, Mark 1:12-14; Matthew 21:18, 19; Luke 19:45-48.

On Monday morning Jesus and his disciples leave

Bethany before breakfast. While on their way to the city, Jesus—being hungry and seeing a fig tree—seeks food thereon but finds none, " for it was not the season of figs." Neither was it the season of fig *leaves*, which naturally *follow* the ripened fruit. Jesus, therefore, pronounces words of doom that immediately wither the fig tree—a symbolic act of Christ's indignation against pretense and hypocrisy.

2. Jesus cleanses the temple the second time, Mark 11:15-18; Matthew 21:12, 13; Luke 19:45-48.

In the beginning of Christ's ministry he drove the traders out of the temple courts, saying, " Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." But covetousness is not easily eradicated, so the money-makers are carrying on their former business of selling doves to those who desire victims for sacrifices, and changing money for those who wish to exchange their foreign coins for Jewish shekels for the sanctuary. They have rallied from Christ's expulsion and rebuke three years previous, and are conducting their business in the temple courts with disobedient persistence. Hence, Jesus again overthrows the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sell doves and gives the keen rebuke: " Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers." There has been progress in sin and obduracy of heart. Through the traders' profanation, " the house of merchandise " has become " a den of robbers."

This Messianic power displayed by Jesus as Lord of the temple serves but to enrage " the chief priests

and scribes and principal men of the people," who seek all the more vigorously how they may bring about Christ's death, fearing to antagonize the feelings of the multitude which continues to hang upon him, listening intently at all his words of grace and power.

3. Jesus teaches that self-sacrifice is the supreme law of life, John 12:20-50.

One of the most striking discourses in the ministry of Jesus is given on Monday of Passion Week. The occasion is the inquiry made by some Greek proselytes who express the deep desire of their souls to see Jesus. Naturally they appeal to Christ's disciples for information concerning the Master. They make their request of Philip (a Greek name), who tells Andrew (another Greek name), and they tell Jesus. In the expressed desire of the Greeks we have a voice from afar. It is a different tone from that of the scribes and Pharisees who seek the death of Jesus. If the Jewish world refuses to receive Jesus as the Messiah, perchance the Greek or Gentile world will accept him as Saviour and Lord. We naturally desire to know something definite about the conversation between Jesus and the Greeks, but this is kept from our ears and eyes. Their request, however, to see Jesus stirs his heart, and he feels afresh the agonies of the cross and sees anew the glory that shall follow his sacrifice. If the world is to be saved, the Jewish and the Gentile world alike, Jesus must die for its redemption.

Jesus improves this occasion by teaching that *self-sacrifice is the supreme law of life.* He illustrates the proposition, first, by *the process of nature,* saying,

" Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." Thus in the vegetable world it is life through death and multiplication through self-sacrifice. Second, Christ illustrates the supreme law of life by *the experience of discipleship:* " He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will the Father honour." Self-denial is the only law of Christian discipleship. He that would save his lower life loses his higher life; but he that is willing to sacrifice the lower will gain the higher. Christian experience is essentially sacrificial. Third, Jesus illustrates the universal law of self-sacrifice by *the death of Christ:* " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." Only the magnetism of the cross can draw a lost world to the divine Saviour who died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

On this solemn occasion Jesus says, " Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour." Perhaps Jesus asked the question, " What shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? " and then by divine aid his apparent wavering gives way to a deep and steady assurance of his mission, and he says: " But for this cause came I unto this hour, and by thy help, O God, I will meet it by death and victory." Then he prays: " Father, glorify thy name," and in answer to the prayer a voice comes out of heaven: " I have both

glorified it and will glorify it again,"—a voice not primarily for the sake of Jesus, who has in his own heart the assurance of his Father's presence, but for the sake of the multitude. The voice from heaven is erroneously interpreted by the people, first, as thunder—a naturalistic interpretation—and, second, as the voice of an angel—an explanation born of superstition. They are willing to give any interpretation except the one that will honour God and his Son.

Three times in the life of Jesus there is heard a voice from heaven, and each time it is uttered while he prays—at his baptism, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and here in the temple courts.

The multitude is perplexed over the fact that the Son of man is to be lifted up or die upon the cross, entertaining as they do the false idea that the Son of man would live indefinitely on the earth. Jesus urges them to walk in the light they have in him, for darkness will soon compass them about. " And even now in them we find," says Jesus, " fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, who saw Christ's glory in the midst of unbelief, blindness of eyes and hardness of heart."

There is one ray of light in the darkness; even of the rulers, many believed on him. But this ray is dimmed by the fact that because of the Pharisees they do not confess Christ lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they love the glory of men more than the glory of God.

Throwing all of his soul into his words, Jesus cried and said, " He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me; and he that beholdeth me

beholdeth him that sent me. I am come as the light of the world that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in darkness."

IV. The Events of Tuesday—a Day of Questions, a Day of Controversy

1. Jesus teaches a lesson of faith from the withered fig tree, Mark 11:19-25; Matthew 21:19-22; Luke 21:37, 38.

Tuesday of Passion Week, the last day of our Saviour's public ministry, has arrived. It is one of the busiest and most strenuous of all the crowded days of his earthly life.

Jesus spent the last six days of his life, with the exception of one or two, in Jerusalem, while the nights were spent at Bethany in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus,—or perhaps on the slopes of Mount Olivet, where he could see the doomed city in the moonlight and hold communion with his Father in the open spaces.

Luke sums up the activities of Jesus during his last days as follows: "And every day he was teaching in the temple; and every night he went out and lodged in the Mount that is called the Mount of Olives, and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him."

On Tuesday morning, as Jesus and his disciples go into the city, they pass by the fig tree which he had blasted the morning before, and see it withered away from the roots. Peter says to Jesus, "Rabbi, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away."

Jesus answering saith unto him, "Have faith in God. Whosoever shall say unto this mountain: 'Be thou taken up and cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that which he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it. Therefore, I say unto you, all things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them. And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against anyone, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." The withering of the fig tree is a token of God's disapproval of pretense and hypocrisy, and shows that retributive justice will be visited on an individual or nation having a form of godliness while denying or failing to realize the power thereof. Not leaves without fruit but faith producing works is to characterize the life of Christ's followers. Not a life of pride but a life of prayer; not a spirit of vengeance but a spirit of forgiveness—these are the excellencies of the Christian life.

2. Jesus answers a series of perplexing questions.

The enemies of Jesus propound four questions which he answers to their astonishment and chagrin. Finally he asks them a question which they are unable to answer, and thus brings the discussion to a close. Following this final controversy Jesus delivers his last public discourse and solemnly denounces the Scribes and Pharisees, and then leaves the temple after having watched with interest those who cast money into the treasury and having commended the poor widow for her sacrificial giving.

First—a rabbinical question, or an educational or

professional question, Mark 11:27–12:12; Matthew 21:23–22:14; Luke 20:1-19. Jesus never received his credentials for teaching from the scribes and Pharisees. He was not a graduate Rabbi; he did not have the technical training of the rabbinical schools. He spoke with authority, but not with the authority of the existing school of theological professors and Jewish leaders; so they said to him, "Tell us; By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" The authority to teach and to cleanse the temple is perhaps what they had in mind. Jesus asked a counter question, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" They dare not say, "It is from heaven," for they had rejected the baptism of John. They were afraid to say, "Of men," because of public sentiment, the people believing that John was a prophet of God. So, to save their influence, they confess their ignorance, and in confessing, lie. When they say, "We know not," Jesus replies, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

Then Jesus further replies in three parables that pierce the hearts of his enemies.

(1) *The parable of the two sons.* One of the sons refused to obey his father at first, but afterward repented and obeyed. In this we see pictured the repentance of the publicans and sinners. The other son said that he would work in his father's vineyard but refused to do so. The son who professed loyalty but practiced disobedience represents the scribes and Pharisees and others of similar disposition and life.

(2) *The parable of the wicked husbandmen.* Jesus

describes a well-equipped vineyard and how the owner sought to get returns from the men to whom he had rented it. Various groups of collectors of the rent were treated with ever-increasing severity. Finally the son—the only son, the beloved son—was sent to collect fruits justly due the owner, but he was seized and killed. In this parable the Jews could see themselves as those who refuse to render the fruits of righteousness to the God of the vineyard, and how they had killed his successive groups of prophets and teachers and finally the Son of man himself. But in the end, "the stone which the builders rejected shall become the headstone of the corner." The slain Son shall ultimately triumph.

(3) *The parable of the marriage feast of the king's son.* It is natural to accept with readiness and joy an invitation to a royal marriage, and yet in the parable those that are bidden make light of the invitation and indifferently go about their daily tasks. Some of the invited guests even mistreat and kill the messengers of the king, but they are visited by royal vengeance. The king is not, however, to be disappointed, and sends his servants into the highways and hedges that the marriage feast may be a success. With this enlarged invitation the wedding is filled with guests. There is present, however, a self-righteous man who desired his own way and refused to wear the usual wedding garment. When asked for the reason of his conduct he is speechless. As a penalty for his unrighteous self-righteousness he is cast into outer darkness.

The Jewish leaders were honoured with the first Gos-

pel invitation, which they rejected, but the privileges of the royal feast were extended to others regarded as outcasts, and the wedding was furnished with guests—the Gospel moved on in its conquering way.

With these three sledge-hammer blows the enemies were crushed for a season.

Second—a political question, Mark 12:13-17; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26. The Pharisees, the strictest of the Jews, and the Herodians, liberal Jewish politicians, form an unholy alliance against Jesus. Feigning righteousness, but really acting as wicked spies, they come to Jesus with extravagant compliments and then ask him a catch question: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?" They evidently wish a direct answer—"Yes" or "No"—but Jesus reads their hearts and asks them to bring to him a penny with which the tribute could be paid. Upon receiving it he uses it as an object lesson, and, looking upon it intently, says, "Whose is this image and superscription?" and receives the reply, "Cæsar's." Then, with simple and superlative wisdom, he says, "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." That is, act justly. Give (pay) Cæsar what is due to Cæsar; give God what is due to God. Be faithful in both politics and religion. Properly adjust the two hemispheres of church and state. Be true to God and also true to man, for duties never conflict. Such a display of wisdom naturally produced a marvellous effect upon the people, while it stung the rulers into abject silence.

Third—a theological question, Mark 12:18-27; Matthew 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-40. Jesus having demolished the Pharisees and Herodians, there were other enemies to assail him—the Sadducees, who were aristocratic sceptics and denied the resurrection. They propound one of their standing problems that had often given them victory over inferior debaters and superficial theologians. They say to him, "Moses gave direction by which a woman might have a series of husbands. Now there was among us a woman whose husband died without offspring, and she availed herself of the Mosaic law, and became the wife of a brother of the deceased husband. This process continued until she had married the seven brothers, all of whom passed away. Eventually she died also. Now," say the Sadducees, "in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of them, for the seven had her to wife? Will she be the wife of husband number one or number seven, or will there be polygamy in heaven?" Jesus replies, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven." Sex distinctions are buried with the body. The nuptial relation is not perpetuated beyond the grave. Marriage belongs to this age and to the sons of this age." The effect of Christ's reply was to cause the multitude to marvel and to bring the Sadducees to silence.

Fourth—a legal question, Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 22:34-40. The Pharisees and scribes rally from their defeat and send a shrewd lawyer to ask Jesus one of the perplexing ethical questions of the day. He says,

"Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" The Pharisees classified the laws and graded them in importance. They ask Christ to name only the first commandment, but he tells them both the first and the second, which are twin requirements, being one in essence—the one fountain of life flowing in two streams, Godward and manward. In reply Jesus says, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God; the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' The second is this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' There is none other commandment greater than these." Christ's wise answer softens the heart of his questioner, who seemingly yields to the truth and admits that loving God and loving man with all one's heart are more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Not far from the kingdom, but on the *outside*. We wonder if he ever entered. We may ask about the greatest commandment, and may assent to the primacy of love, and never do the will of God.

3. Jesus crushes his enemies by propounding a Messianic question, Mark 12:35-37; Matthew 22:1-46; Luke 20:41-44.

It is now Christ's turn to take the offensive which his enemies had been assuming in their terrific cannonading. As he is teaching in the temple court, and the Pharisees are gathered around him, he asks the baffling question, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son

is he?" They promptly reply, "The Son of David." "Very well, then," said Jesus, "admitting what you say, how doth David in the Spirit call him Lord? For David himself said in the holy scriptures, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.' If David, then, calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" The enemies were blind not to see that Jesus was the Son of David according to the flesh and the Son of God also, and therefore David's Lord and ours. Thus was brought to a close the heated controversy between Jesus and his enemies.

4. Christ delivers his last public discourse in the court of the temple, Mark 12:38-40; Matthew 23:1-39; Luke 20:45-47.

The enemies have reached the climax of their opposition to Jesus. Though defeated, they are still impenitent, hypocritical and hard-hearted. So Jesus, in his last public discourse, shows his love for the disciples by warning them against hypocrisy and formality; his indignation against the rulers on account of their spiritual blindness and dead ritualism and his compassion for Jerusalem because the holy city had sinned away its day of Gospel opportunities.

The seven woes Christ utters against the scribes and Pharisees must be viewed in the light of his loving heart and the Pharisees' formal service and hardness of heart.

The *first woe* (v. 13) is uttered because they not only refuse to enter the kingdom themselves but shut the gate in the face of those who wish to enter.

The *second woe* (v. 15)—because they show great zeal in winning adherents to their formal religion and in so doing double the condemnation of the new converts.

The *third woe* (vs. 16–22)—because they make trifling and superficial distinctions as to the kind of oaths that are binding. The scribes and Pharisees taught that the old form of oaths was not binding, but only the new kind; the former being more *general,* and the latter more *specific.*

The fourth woe (vv. 23, 24)—because they take great pains to observe the details of religious forms and neglect fundamental moral duties. They tithe small herbs, and properly so, but fail to lead righteous lives. They strain out a gnat and swallow a camel, lack spiritual perspective, religious balance, a sense of values and practical consistency.

The *fifth woe* (vv. 25, 26)—because they emphasize outward cleansing but neglect inward purity. The dishes on the table are beautiful, but the food and wine which they contain are the product of extortion and the result of an excessive desire for eating and drinking.

The *sixth woe* (vv. 27, 28)—because they are like whitewashed tombs containing decayed human flesh—beautiful without, corrupt within.

The *seventh woe* (vv. 29–36)—because they say that they would not have slain the prophets as their fathers did. But falsehood is on their lips, for they resemble their ancestors in moral traits. They will have ample opportunities to show their real kinship to

their wicked ancestors, for Jesus will send them prophets, wise men and scribes whom they will mistreat as their fathers did the prophets.

5. Christ shows his deep interest in how people contribute to the temple treasury, Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4.

Christ's last *act* in the temple was to sit over against the treasury; his last *look* was to behold how the multitude cast money into the treasury; his last *words* were a commendation of the poor widow who cast in two mites—even all her living—and won a name for unselfish giving superior to the rich who, of their superfluity, made great contributions. Christ looks not only at what we give, but how we give it; not only at how much we have from which to give, but how much we have after giving.

With sadness of heart Jesus bids farewell to Jerusalem, never to enter it again as a public teacher, but to return in two days to be unjustly tried, cruelly mocked and wickedly crucified, and in three days to be gloriously raised from the dead.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERIOD OF HUMILIATION—JESUS DYING FOR OUR SINS

(The Period is divided into two sections)

Section A. Events Taking Place Between Tuesday Afternoon and Thursday Night of Passion Week

I. While Sitting on the Mount of Olives Jesus Teaches His Disciples about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the End of the Age
   1. The occasion
   2. Jesus answers the inquiry of his disciples about coming events
   3. Jesus gives the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem—the "abomination of desolation"
   4. Jesus warns against false Christs
      a. In contrast with false Christs, his coming is to be universal and instantaneous
      b. Jesus portrays the final catastrophe in terms of natural disturbances
      c. Jesus declares the exact time of his return impossible to determine
      d. Jesus declares the certainty of his return, but does not specify the exact time
   5. Jesus teaches his disciples readiness by a series of parables
      a. The Porter
      b. The Master of the House and the Thief
      c. Faithful and Evil Servants
      d. The Ten Virgins
      e. The Talents
   6. Jesus pictures the Judgment Day by the parable of the Sheep and the Goats

II. Jesus Predicts His Crucifixion Two Days Prior to the Event
   1. Jesus predicts his death
   2. The Sanhedrin adopts a method of subtlety for dispatching Jesus

III. Mary of Bethany Anoints Jesus in the House of Simon the Leper
   1. The probable occasion of the feast
   2. Mary anoints Jesus for burial

IV. On Tuesday Night, Following the Feast at Simon's House, Judas Bargains with the Rulers to Betray Jesus

V. On Thursday Afternoon Jesus Gives Directions for the Preparation of the Paschal Meal
   1. Wednesday is a day of rest
   2. Preparation is made for the Paschal meal

VI. Thursday Evening After Sunset, or the Beginning of Jewish Friday, Jesus Partakes of the Paschal Meal with the Twelve

VII. During the Paschal Meal Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples and Illustrates the Necessity for Humility

VIII. While at the Paschal Meal Jesus Points Out Judas as the One Who Should Betray Him
   1. Jesus announces that the traitor is at the table
   2. Judas, perceiving that he is discovered, leaves the table

IX. After the Departure of Judas Jesus Gives a Timely Warning Against Desertion
   1. Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment of love
   2. Jesus warns them against desertion

X. Jesus Institutes the Sacred Memorial Supper

XI. Jesus Delivers the First Part of His Farewell Discourse to His Disciples Immediately Following the Institution of the Lord's Supper
   1. The circumstances of the discourse
   2. Jesus discourses on:
      a. The Heavenly Home
      b. The Heavenly Way
      c. The Heavenly Task
      d. The Heavenly Fellowship
      e. The Heavenly Peace

XII. The Second Part of Jesus' Farewell Discourse is Delivered on the Way to Gethsemane
   1. Jesus and his disciples leave the upper room for Gethsemane
   2. Jesus utters the parable of the Vine and the Branches
   3. The parable interpreted
   4. Jesus speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit
   5. Jesus encourages his disciples to pray

XIII. Jesus Utters an Intercessory Prayer

XIV. Jesus Suffers Inexpressible Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane
1. Jesus enters the garden with three disciples
2. Jesus prays three times
3. Jesus arouses his slumbering disciples and faces those who had come to arrest him

Section B. Events From the Agony in Gethsemane, Thursday Night, to the Burial in Joseph's Tomb

I. The Arrest of Jesus
1. Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss
2. The disciples offer resistance and are rebuked by Jesus
3. The disciples forsake Jesus

II. Jesus' Trial Before Religious and Civil Authorities, the Denial of Peter and Suicide of Judas
1. The religious trial of Jesus
   a. Before Annas
   b. Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin
   d. Final trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin after sunrise
2. Peter thrice denies his Lord
3. Judas commits suicide
4. The civil trial of Jesus
   a. Jesus before Pilate the first time
   b. Jesus before Herod
   c. Jesus' final appearance before Pilate

III. Jesus is Crucified Between Two Robbers
1. Jesus is mocked by Roman soldiers
2. Jesus bears his cross to Golgotha
   a. Jesus becomes exhausted and Simon, of Cyrene, is pressed into service to carry the cross
   b. The women of Jerusalem lament as Jesus passes by
3. A view of Jesus during the first three hours on the cross, nine to twelve
   a. The inscriptions on the cross
   b. Three attitudes of mind toward Jesus
   c. Jesus utters seven sentences from the cross
4. Jesus during the three hours of darkness, twelve to three
5. Jesus' death is accompanied by striking events
6. The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea
7. The body of Jesus is guarded by Roman soldiers

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERIOD OF HUMILIATION—CHRIST DYING FOR OUR SINS

To THIS period belong the events connected with the life of Jesus from the time he closed his public ministry until he was buried in Joseph's new tomb. Naturally the events fall into two sections: first, those from Tuesday afternoon to Thursday night of Passion Week, and bringing us down to the agony in the garden; second, those events beginning with the arrest of Jesus in the garden, Thursday night, through Saturday of Passion Week.

First Section deals with events taking place between Tuesday afternoon and Thursday night of Passion Week

I. WHILE SITTING ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE END OF THE AGE, MARK 13:1-37; MATTHEW 24 AND 25; LUKE 21:5-36

1. Note especially the occasion of the prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. The disciples call the attention of Jesus to the magnificence of the temple. He sees, however, the sins of the people and says, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

2. Peter, James, John and Andrew ask him when the city shall be destroyed, when he shall come the second time, and when the world shall come to an end. It is worthy of note that his first reply to this question is, "Take heed that no man lead you astray." After describing the days of conflict and war, in which people would likely think Jesus would return, he says distinctly, "These things must need come to pass, but the end is not yet." After portraying the persecution that they would endure, he urges them to be faithful in their testimony; not to be anxious about personal defense when brought before the courts, but to settle it in their hearts that they will give themselves to the supreme task of preaching the Gospel, trusting in the Lord to give them mouth and wisdom when arraigned before civil authorities. "In your patience," says he, "ye shall win your souls." Spiritual victory comes only through persistent patience. As indicative of the mission of his people and of his plan for this age, he says to his disciples (Matthew 24:14), "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, then shall the end come."

3. Christ also gives his disciples the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem. This sign was called an abomination of desolation and was anticipated by Daniel, the prophet. It was perhaps so called because the Roman ensign was an abomination in the sight of God and his people, and was a symbol of the desolation that the invading army would wreak upon the Jews. The encompassing Roman armies would also be the sure sign

of impending destruction and doom. Thus the Roman ensign, standing in the holy place, and the Roman army, encompassing the city, were indicative of the days of God's vengeance in which he used the Romans as his sheriffs to execute his sentence against the rebellious Israelites. During those days of siege and battle they would suffer unprecedented tribulation and even complete annihilation, except for God's regard for his own elect, for whose sake the days were shortened.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. tragically closed the Jewish dispensation. The whole city was trodden down by the Gentiles and will remain in desolation until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled and the Jews return to their own land and believe the Gospel which once as a nation they rejected.

4. Jesus warns his disciples against false Christs. Christ will surely return to earth, but before he comes men shall arise claiming to be Christ and shall lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Jesus again solemnly repeats the words, "Take ye heed." Those who claim to be Christs would have a definite location in the wilderness, in the city, in the inner chamber; they would be at one place but not at another. Jesus, therefore, warns them against being deceived, saying that when Christ comes his presence will be known everywhere at the same time. His coming will be quick and universal as lightning, which defies definite location, but flashes from east to west in a moment. "Wheresoever," says he, "the carcass is,

there will the eagles be gathered together." That is, where the conditions are ripe, judgment will come. The instinct of the vulture for the dead body is suggestive of the unerring judgment of God upon moral corruption.

Jesus then portrays the final catastrophe in terms of natural disturbances in sun and moon and stars and earth and sea. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in the heavens, even the Son of man himself, coming in a cloud with power and great glory and sending forth angels with trumpet sound to gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other. But Christ's followers need not be alarmed or downcast, for when these things begin to come to pass they are to lift up their heads, because their full redemption draweth nigh.

Jesus calls the attention of the disciples to the leaves of the trees in the springtime, especially to the fig tree. It is difficult, however, to know the very day spring begins. "So," says he, "ye cannot know the exact time of the coming of the Son of man. But this generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished." If the things accomplished are the destruction of Jerusalem, the phrase "this generation" would refer to the Jewish people then living; but if, as is most likely, "these things" refer to the events at the close of this age, the phrase "this generation" would indicate a quality of character in the people and is equivalent to saying Christ's own followers will, as a new generation or class of people born again, continue until he shall return, the gates of

Hades having never prevailed against his followers. Then, to strengthen their hearts, he says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Jesus assures the disciples of the certainty of his return, but also informs them of the uncertainty of the time of his return, stating that even the angels in heaven and the Son himself do not know, but the Father only is fully aware of the exact day and hour when the Son of man shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. The world will move on in its normal course, as in the days of Noah, and Christ's coming shall be as certain and unexpected as the flood and storms and earthquakes.

5. In the midst of these momentous events, so graphically portrayed, Jesus urges readiness upon his disciples, using a series of parables to illustrate and enforce the lesson. The indefiniteness and uncertainty of the exact time of our Lord's return is helpfully utilized, for he says, "Take ye heed; watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is."

(1) The first parable is that of the porter who is urged to watch for the return of his lord, who may come at any hour, night or day. We are, therefore, to watch at every season, making supplication that we may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man, and, through him, acceptable in the sight of God. Then, with impressive repetition, Jesus says, "What I say unto you, I say unto all—Watch!"

(2) The second parable Jesus uses to impress the

importance of readiness for his return is that of the master of the house who, not knowing the exact hour in which the thief might come, keeps perpetual vigilance lest his house be broken into and his treasures taken away.

(3) The third parable in this connection is that of the faithful and the evil servant. The evil servant is one who abuses the merciful delay of our Lord's return and presumes that he will never come, and gives himself over to debauchery and mistreatment of his fellow-servants, to personal degradation and social wickedness. The faithful and wise servant shall receive promotion upon the return of his lord in vivid contrast with the wailing and gnashing of teeth, which is the merited doom of the wicked.

(4) The fourth parable that Jesus employs to enforce perpetual readiness is that of the ten virgins. This is one of the most beautiful and impressive of all our Saviour's parables. He describes an oriental marriage and the failure of some of the attendants to arrive in time for the celebration, and through neglect in providing the necessary amount of oil for their lamps they were delayed until the door was shut, never to open at their bidding. The application of Jesus is, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." We may spoil the beauty and teaching of this parable by seeking to find a spiritual meaning in every detail. The main point of the parable is evident. This point Jesus emphasized, and we do well to follow his example.

(5) The parable of the talents is a significant part

of our Saviour's discourse to his disciples while they were in the shadows with him. As the main point of the parable of the virgins is readiness, that of the parable of the talents is faithfulness. The servant who received five talents, and improved them to the utmost limit of his ability, is promoted in the day of account; so is the servant that received two talents, for he is equally loyal to his lord and his opportunities. The words of approval and promotion are identical, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

How true to human nature is the conduct of the man who received one talent and through indolence and slothfulness hid his lord's money. Instead of making a simple statement of his achievements, he utters a libel against his master, saying, "Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow and gathering where thou didst not scatter, and I was afraid and went away and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, thou hast thine own." Perhaps he told the truth in saying, "I was afraid." Cowards never achieve great results—never are moved to loyalty in a noble cause. With dramatic pathos the wicked servant returns his lord's talent unimproved. The master now pronounces the merited sentence of doom and judges the man from his own words which, taken at face value, condemn the servant who utters them in his own defense. If afraid to invest his lord's money in some progressive enterprise, he should have been thoughtful enough to put the talent in a savings bank that his

master might, on his return, have received the principal together with the usual rate of interest. "Then," says Jesus, "take ye away, therefore, the talent from him and give it unto him that hath ten talents, for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." Talents unimproved are forfeited, while he who improves his talents receives additional reward. The doom of the unprofitable servant is the outer darkness; the reward of the faithful servant is the joy of his lord.

6. The most graphic scene that we have of the judgment is drawn by Jesus in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Though the Son of man shall leave the earth by an ignominious death, he shall return in glory accompanied by the holy angels. Instead of hanging upon a cross of shame, he shall sit upon the throne of his glory. Before him as a king and judge shall be gathered all the nations for whom he lived and died and conquered death. The separation of the nations, or rather the individuals in the nations, is based upon the fundamental difference in the nature of those who are judged, quite as vital as the difference between sheep and goats. A beautiful pastoral scene is thrust forward to the day of judgment, and the King and the Judge is also the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. The sheep and the goats are separated one from the other, the sheep being placed on the King's right hand and the goats on the left. To those on his right hand he gives a royal welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for

you from the foundation of the world." They show a true, unselfish spirit in their attitude toward their fellow-men and wonder at the revelation of their character, so unconscious were they of any meritorious deeds; but the King says, "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." A cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall not lose its reward. The brethren of Jesus are the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ and those who do the will of their Father which is in heaven.

Then the saddest words ever uttered were spoken by the King to those on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." One word describes the difference between the righteous and the wicked—the little, negative "not." They were careless and neglectful of their fellow-men because they knew not the Father nor the Son. To them Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me." The judgment scene closes with these words of doom for the wicked and reward for the righteous, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

II. Jesus Predicts His Crucifixion Two Days Prior to the Event, Mark 14:1-2; Matthew 26:1-5; Luke 22:1-2

Jesus was probably at Bethany when he said to his disciples, "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh and the Son of man is delivered up to be cruci-

fied." These words were spoken on Tuesday evening, or the beginning of Jewish Wednesday, therefore two days before Jewish Friday, when the crucifixion most likely took place.

At the same time the Sanhedrin held a meeting and voted to take Jesus by subtlety rather than openly, fearing a tumult among the people. The Jewish court had previously decided to put Jesus to death, but now they decide also upon the means by which it is to be accomplished.

III. Mary of Bethany Anoints Jesus in the House of Simon the Leper, Mark 14:3-9; Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:2-8

It was Tuesday evening or Jewish Wednesday when Simon, who had been a leper, prepared a feast for Jesus in his own home in Bethany. This was doubtless a banquet of gratitude for the healing power of Jesus he had experienced. We find that Jesus and the little Bethany family, whose hospitality he so often enjoyed, were honour guests. As usual, Martha was at the head of the service department and Mary acted the part of sentimental devotion so characteristic of her nature.

While reclining at the feast Mary brought an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair so that the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment. The beauty of the scene is marred by sordid criticism. The loving act of Mary is condemned —not in positive terms, but by unmistakable insinu-

ation. Judas was at the head of the critic band. The question is asked, " To what purpose is this waste? "—referring to the pouring out of the ointment. But Judas, the robber-treasurer of the apostolic group and head critic of those who censure, asked with sordid selfishness, under cover of kindness, " Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? "—not that he cared for the poor, but for the money that the ointment would bring, for every penny added to the treasury increased the amount that he carried, and therefore the amount from which he might sneakingly embezzle. Christ's reply is very significant, " Let her alone. Why trouble her? She hath wrought a good work on me. She hath done what she could. She hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying." He then lifts the woman suddenly into the unfading light of a glorious immortality, " Wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." All unconsciously Mary erected for herself a monument more precious than gold and more enduring than granite. What she did was in anticipation of the burial of Jesus. She did not reserve the ointment for the lifeless body. She brought her flowers in advance of the visit of the angel of death and did not wait to place them upon casket and grave. " She came *aforehand,*"—a gentle rebuke for those who are perpetually *behind-hand.* Post-mortem kindness is better than cruelty, but timely thoughtfulness is pleasing to both God and man. We find here in Mary an illustration of the Gospel of love.

Her deed was modest, heroic, unconscious, generous, timely. It made her immortal.

IV. On Tuesday Night, Following the Feast at Simon's House, Judas Bargains with the Rulers to Betray Jesus, Mark 14:10-11; Matthew 26:14-16; Luke 22:3-6

Stung as with a scorpion lash by the rebuke of Jesus, in defending and immortalizing Mary, Judas left the banquet in Simon's house and went to the chief priests and said, "What are ye willing to give me and I will deliver him unto you?" With fiendish joy the rulers welcome the proposition of Judas, who took the initiative in turning Jesus over to their hands. Judas stole from the apostolic treasury and now betrays his Lord for the price of a slave. For thirty pieces of silver Judas agrees to turn Jesus over to the authorities, and begins at once to seek the means by which he may conveniently betray Jesus without creating a tumult. Such is the sad, downward course of Judas—a man of ability and opportunity, a man who *might have been,* but who suffers endless remorse because he *was not.*

V. On Thursday Afternoon Jesus Gives Directions for the Preparation of the Paschal Meal, Mark 14:12-16; Matthew 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-15

Most likely Wednesday of Passion Week was a day of rest with Jesus and the eleven, spent in the quietude of the Bethany home. Thursday was spent wholly with the disciples until the arrest in Gethsemane after midnight.

Interested in the details of preparation for the passover, the disciples ask Jesus where they are to prepare for this annual national celebration. In response to their inquiry Jesus sends Peter and John into Jerusalem to make the necessary preparation for the paschal meal. Jesus tells them that on reaching the city they will meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, a service usually rendered by women. They are to ask him about the guest chamber in his home where Jesus and the disciples are to celebrate the passover. Perhaps a previous understanding had already obtained between Jesus and the father of the household. It is pleasing to think that possibly the home in which the paschal meal was observed, and where the Lord's supper was instituted, was that of the father and mother of John Mark, the young man who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on a part of their first missionary tour and who wrote the Gospel that bears his name. Peter and John find a large upper room furnished in preparation for the passover, even as Jesus had said unto them, and they proceed at once to secure everything necessary for the feast—lamb, unleavened bread, etc.

VI. Thursday Evening After Sunset, or the Beginning of Jewish Friday, Jesus Partakes of the Paschal Meal with the Twelve Apostles and Rebukes Their Selfish Ambition, Mark 14:17; Matthew 26:20; Luke 22:14-16, 24-30

This was the last passover Jesus celebrated with his disciples, and he had been especially desirous of eating

it with them. Never did a group of men celebrate the Jewish passover with more intensity of thought and with deeper emotion. Yet at the beginning of the paschal meal there was a manifestation of the spirit of jealousy on the part of the disciples which ought not to be possible among the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. There was even a contention among them as to which of them should be accounted the greatest; as to the seat of honour they would occupy at the paschal meal. Jesus rebukes their jealous spirit. He tells them plainly that they are to be different from the kings of the earth who exercise lordship over their subjects. He points to his own life as one of humility and service and repeats the truth so hard for them to understand, that he who is greatest in service is greatest in fact. He encourages their hearts by assuring them of promotion for their loyalty, for they shall enjoy fellowship with Jesus in his kingdom when each one shall have a throne of honour and service. Hence, jealousy should be ruled out of their hearts, there being service and honour enough for all.

To illustrate the important doctrine of unselfishness and humility, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. He, in full consciousness of his approaching death, and of his pre-existence and authority since he came forth from God, who had given all things into his hands, and of his return to the Father in triumph, and of his intense and deathless love for his disciples—in full consciousness of all these things Jesus condescends to teach by word and act the great doctrine of self-abasement and humble service.

VII. During the Paschal Meal Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples and Illustrates the Necessity of Humility, John 13:1-20

Jesus had noticed that the usual custom of washing the feet after they had been soiled by a journey had not been observed by the disciples as they entered the upper room. No one would humble himself to perform this act of kindness and humility for another, so they all reclined at the table without this usual ceremony—neglected through false pride. Therefore, in the midst of the passover supper Jesus arose from the table and laid aside his outer garments and girded himself with a towel and, pouring water into a basin, began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Upon coming to Simon Peter, the impulsive apostle interposed an objection. Doubtless feeling the rebuke of Christ's unselfish deed, he saith unto him, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"—a mild but positive way of declining to accept the service from Christ. Jesus says, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,"—thus implying that Peter ought to acquiesce in what Jesus is doing. Whereupon Peter states emphatically, "Thou shalt never wash my feet,"—manifesting thereby some of the pride that Jesus was condemning. Consequently Christ says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." It sometimes requires as much humility to accept an act as it does to perform it. But Peter is immediately penitent and says, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head. Remove the dust of the street from every part of my body. I

make a complete surrender to thy will." Jesus replies that a thorough ceremonial washing is not necessary, for they had taken that bath prior to coming to the passover feast and needed not that the ceremony should extend any further than to the washing of the feet only.

Jesus passes from the idea of an external ceremony of washing the body to the cleansing of the soul and says, " Ye are clean but not all,"—knowing who would betray him. Having washed the disciples' feet, and having resumed his position at the table, he questions them as to the meaning of the act—" Know ye what I have done to you? " They call him Lord and Master, and if they mean it they ought in heart to follow his example. He performed the menial service of washing their feet; they ought not to be above rendering any service to their fellow-men; because a servant is not greater than his lord, neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. He then pronounces a blessing upon those who, knowing these things, do them.

Jesus evidently did not intend that foot-washing should be a church ordinance, like baptism or the Lord's supper. He taught by this incident the doctrine of humility and service. It is referred to only once more in the New Testament, and then not as a church ordinance but as an act of private courtesy and social kindness.

VIII. While at the Paschal Meal Jesus Points Out Judas as the One Who Should Betray Him, Mark 14:18-21; Matthew 26:21-22; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-30

On Tuesday evening preceding, Judas had closed the

bargain with the rulers and received the price of his treachery. He perhaps had in his possession the thirty pieces of silver when Jesus uttered the tragic words of Luke 22:21, 22, "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table, for the Son of man indeed goeth as it hath been determined; but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed." With a quick glance the disciples look around at each other, doubting of whom he spake and yet naturally seeking to detect the traitor. Each one asked the question, "Lord, is it I?"—or, to put it more accurately, "Lord, it is not I, is it?"—to which Jesus replies, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth even as it is written of him, but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for that man if he had not been born." Men are moral agents in all their course of sin as well as in the work of righteousness. The wicked may fulfil scripture and yet be responsible for their actions. Prophecy does not destroy responsibility. Men are free in going to their doom, and conscience as well as God justly condemns the evildoer. Because God can overrule the sins of men is no mitigation of man's iniquity.

In the effort of the disciples to detect the traitor, Peter, as usual, takes the initiative. At the paschal feast, however, John, the beloved disciple, had the seat of honour and was, therefore, nearest Jesus. To this disciple Peter whispered, saying, "Ask Jesus who the traitor is." So John, leaning close up to the breast of Jesus, says, "Lord, who is it?" and Jesus says,

"He it is for whom I shall dip the sop and give it him." And after the sop had been given to Judas, Satan came with unusual power into the heart of the traitor and made him take the final step in the sad tragedy. So Judas, having received the sop, went out *straightway,* and it was night—night in Jerusalem, night in the world, and, above all, night in the heart of Judas.

IX. After the Departure of Judas from the Paschal Feast, Jesus Gives a Timely Warning to His Disciples Against Desertion, Mark 14:27-31; Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:31-38

Immediately after receiving the sop, Judas leaves Jesus and the eleven disciples in the upper room. The atmosphere has been cleared of a poisonous spirit, and Christ gives himself wholly to the eleven who, though imperfect, are far from cherishing a treacherous feeling. Jesus speaks very tenderly to the eleven apostles, calling them *little children.* He tells them that he will go where they cannot come at present, but gives them a new commandment, even the command to love one another—an old commandment in age but new in emphasis and obligation. The standard of love he lays down is not the love that man has for man, but that Christ has for his own. "Ye are to love one another," says Jesus, "as I have loved you," and then he makes the statement verified in history: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." He virtually says, "My love, not man's

love, is your standard and the badge of your discipleship." Love must go on its conquering way in a world of hate.

Jesus warns his disciples against desertion, saying, "All ye shall be offended in me this night," but gives them assurance that he shall go before them into Galilee after his resurrection and meet them on an appointed mountain. He directs his warning particularly to Peter, for whom he had special consideration and against whom Satan had a special grudge. He says, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat, but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren." With impulsive boldness Peter says, "I am ready to go both to prison and to death. I will lay down my life for thee." The other disciples likewise avow their loyalty. As Peter spake more vehemently and emphatically than the others, Jesus says to him, "Verily I say unto thee that this night, before the cock crows, thou shalt deny me thrice."

X. Jesus Institutes the Sacred Memorial of His Sufferings and Death, Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:17-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26

Immediately after eating the paschal lamb with the disciples, Jesus instituted the sacred memorial of his sufferings and death—commonly called the Lord's supper. He took some of the unleavened bread that had been prepared for the passover, and when he had

blessed he brake it and gave to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup and gave thanks and gave to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins." The word "cup" is used to signify the contents of the cup, or the wine, which in turn represents and symbolizes the blood of Christ as the bread is a symbol of the body of Christ. As often as we eat the bread and drink the cup we proclaim the Lord's death till he come.

XI. Jesus Delivers the First Part of His Farewell Discourse to His Disciples Immediately Following the Institution of the Lord's Supper, John 14

Jesus and the eleven apostles are still in the upper room where he had celebrated the last passover and instituted the sacred memorial of his sufferings and death to be observed in remembrance of him until he shall come again. Jesus had just said that he was going away, and that the disciples could not follow him immediately. He referred not to some place in his missionary journey but to the presence of the Father. The disciples did not understand just where he was going, but were grieved to think that whatever he meant they could not be with him. In the midst of this anticipated loneliness and this trouble of spirit, Jesus delivers the discourse found in the fourteenth chapter of John.

In this chapter he tells them, *first, about the heavenly home*—the house of many abiding places which he has gone to prepare for them. *Second, the heavenly*

way. In reply to the question of Thomas, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." *Third, the heavenly task.* Philip says to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be sufficient." Jesus says that his words and works show that he and the Father are one, and makes a definite statement as to the mission of those who are on the way to the heavenly home (verse 12), "Verily, verily, I say unto you: he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." A life of prayer will produce a life of works; and working and praying are the chief characteristics of those on the way to heaven. *Fourth, the heavenly fellowship.* Judas (not Iscariot) wonders how the Lord can make himself known to his disciples without a public demonstration before the world. Jesus says that the matter of divine manifestation is a problem of love. "If a man love me," says he, "he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Thus the Father, the Son, and the believer have a blessed fellowship of love in the midst of a world of hate. *Fifth, heavenly peace.* With their hearts rent with grief, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid, for the Holy Spirit, the divine helper, will be with you to instruct, to comfort, and to guide."

XII. The Second Part of Christ's Farewell Discourse is Delivered on the Way to Gethsemane, John 15 and 16

After the cheering message recorded in the fourteenth chapter, Jesus says, "Arise, let us go hence." So they leave the upper room and go on their way through the streets of Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane.

While on the eve of *departing* Jesus speaks of *abiding*. In the stillness and solemnity of the night, and in consciousness of the fact that he will soon leave his disciples, he utters the beautiful and impressive allegory of the vine and the branches.

In studying John, chapter 15, it is well enough to bear in mind *the relation that a branch sustains to the vine*. First, the relation of the branch to the vine may be superficial, formal, temporary and non-fruit-bearing. In such a case the branch will be removed from the vine and cast into the fire. Second, the relation of the branch to the vine may be deep, vital, permanent and fruit-bearing. When such a relation is established the branch is never cut off and cast into the fire, but is pruned that it may bear more fruit. Thus the destiny of the branch depends upon whether it ever had the right connection with the vine.

Then, too, note *the relation of the vine to the branches*. The vine furnishes the life for the branches, for apart from the vine the branch is dead; and, second, the vine produces fruit through the branches. Herein we find our mission and our joy. Herein we find the secret of answered prayer. Herein we see the beauty and necessity of a fruitful life.

The believer is to abide in Christ and bring forth the fruits of a Christian life in the midst of a hostile atmosphere. We are to love Christ and love one another in the world that crucified him and persecutes his followers. But we need not be surprised; the servant is not greater than his lord. We need not fail and must not falter; for the Spirit of truth will bear witness of Christ, and the believers are also to bear witness in co-operation with the Holy Spirit whom Christ sends from the Father to carry on the work of redemption.

In John, chapter 16, Jesus shows the disciples that it is necessary for him to leave them in body, otherwise the Holy Spirit would not come in power to carry on convicting, regenerating and comforting work in human hearts. So he says to the disciples, " When he, the Comforter, has come, he will convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness because I go to the Father and ye behold me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world hath been judged."

It is through the co-operative witness of the Holy Spirit and of Christ's followers that the world is to be convicted of the sin of unbelief, of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ universally needed by sinful men and of the judgment passed upon Satan by the conquest of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and to guide into all truth, and to declare unto the believer all things that are to come, guiding and revealing the will of God.

To cheer the disciples in the midst of their great and arduous tasks, Jesus says, " We will be separated for

only a little while, then ye shall see me again." They do not understand him, but he assures them that although sorrow may endure for the night, joy will come in the morning. He gives them encouragement to pray, saying, "Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be fulfilled." And after stating that they would desert him and leave him alone, he gives them the legacy of peace. He states that in the world of strife they may find in him an abundance of peace; and in the sublime consciousness of his own victory says, "In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have conquered the world."

XIII. Christ's Intercessory Prayer, John 17

Somewhere near Gethsemane, close to the midnight hour, Jesus ceases to talk with his disciples and begins to pray. The hour about which he had so often spoken has now come, and he prays the Father to glorify the Son with the glory which the Son had with him before the world was. A consciousness of his pre-existence and his fellowship with the Father strengthens him in the trying ordeal through which he is passing.

The *first petition* is *for himself* (verse 2), "Glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee." The *second is for the disciples* (verse 9) whom the Father had given him; and the *third for those also that believe on him* through the words spoken by the disciples. He prays for the *preservation* of his followers—"Holy Father, keep them in thy name;" second, their *sanctification*—"Sanctify them in their truth;" third, *unification*—"I pray that they may all be one, even as thou Father art

in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us that the world may believe that thou didst send me;" fourth, *glorification*—" Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that where I am they also may be with me that they may behold my glory." He closed his intercession with the words that throb with the love of God, the love of Christ and the love of the believer, " O, righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee, and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name and will make it known that the love wherewith thou lovest me may be in them and I in them."

XIV. Jesus Suffers Inexpressible Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, Mark 14:26, 32-42; Matthew 26:30, 36-46; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1

Having finished the intercessory prayer, Jesus reaches the Garden of Gethsemane, an open space between the Brook Kedron and the foot of the Mount of Olives. In this solemn spot, made sweet and sacred as a retreat of prayer for Jesus and the disciples, Christ now enters into the agony of sacrificial death. Near the gate of the garden he left eight of the disciples while he took Peter and James and John and went farther into the garden. His solemn exhortation to all of the disciples was to pray. He even went a little farther than the chosen three and fell on his face and prayed. Such a prayer never came from the lips of man, for no one else ever felt the poignancy of grief and the burden of sin that pressed like a mountain

upon the soul of the Son of man. With his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and in agony that caused him to sweat as it were great drops of blood, he prayed, " O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me. Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him.

After the first petition he returns to the three disciples near by, and, finding them sleeping, says unto Peter, " What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." And then with a spirit of appreciation of their exhausted condition on account of the long and heavy strain of the evening until the midnight hour, he says, " The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Again he goes the second time into the shadows of the garden and says, " O, my Father, if this cup cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done." And on returning to the disciples he finds them sleeping again; so, quietly leaving them, he prays the third time alone with God and is conscious of the fact that he is bearing, as no one else ever could bear, the sin of the world.

Upon returning to his disciples the third time, and finding them asleep again, he says to them, " Sleep on now and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." At this time Judas and the band who came to arrest Jesus are nearing the place of prayer, and with calm courage the Son of man enters upon the sure march from the agony in the garden to the death on the cross.

The Second Section of the Period of Humiliation includes events from the agony in the garden to the burial in Joseph's tomb.

I. The Arrest of Jesus, Mark 14:43-52; Matthew 27:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12

Immediately after the agony in the garden, Judas appears with a band of men and identifies Jesus with the treacherous kiss. But that is unnecessary, for when Jesus asks the officers, "Whom seek ye?" and they say, "Jesus of Nazareth," he says promptly, "I am he. Arrest me if you will, but let these—my disciples—go on their way in freedom." The disciples could scarcely bear to see Jesus put under arrest, and therefore ask, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" But before an answer could be given, Peter—true to his impulsive nature—drew a sword and struck the high priest's servant, Malchus, and cut off his right ear. Jesus instantly touched the servant's ear and healed it and said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into its place. I do not need your sword, for I could call to my Father and have legions of angels to come to my defense."

Jesus rebuked the priests and captains of the temple because they came out against him as if he were a robber. They might have quietly arrested him as he daily taught in the temple, but this they refused to do, and in so refusing unwittingly fulfilled the scriptures, for their hour had come and the power of darkness was moving them to action. Then all the disciples—according to Christ's prophecy—forsook him and fled, putting safety before loyalty.

The arrested, betrayed and forsaken Christ presents a sad spectacle in the garden of sorrow as Jesus starts to the mockery of a Jewish trial and the agony of the cross.

II. Jesus is Tried Before Both the Religious and Civil Authorities

The trial of Jesus was in six stages. It was both religious and civil, each trial consisting of three acts. The religious trial was first before Annas, the ex-high-priest; then before Caiaphas and an informal meeting of the Sanhedrin before six o'clock in the morning; after that, a formal and legal meeting of the Sanhedrin about six o'clock in the morning. The civil trial also consisted of three stages: first, before Pilate; second, before Herod; and, third, before Pilate again.

1. The religious trial of Jesus.

(1) The first trial of Jesus before the religious authorities was before Annas, the ex-high-priest, John 18:12-14, 19-23.

In this trial Jesus was asked concerning his disciples and his doctrine and was violently struck by one of the officers of the court. Jesus did not literally turn the other cheek, but said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"

(2) The second stage of the religious trial was before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin before dawn in the residence of the high-priest, Mark 14:53, 55-65; Matthew 26:57, 59-68; Luke 22:54, 63-65; Luke 18:24.

No definite charge was brought against Jesus. False

witnesses were secured to pervert a saying in the early ministry of Jesus that seemed to reflect upon the sanctity of the temple, when he said, " Destroy the temple of God and in three days I will build it again." At first Christ was silent amid the multitude of contradictory charges, but when put on oath by Caiaphas in these words, " I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus saith unto him, " Thou hast said "—that is, " I am." Christ then makes the astonishing declaration that henceforth (that is, *from now on*), in all the process of human history, he will perform his work as the Son of man and Son of God, and culminate it by coming again to earth in the clouds of heaven. The high-priest is greatly enraged and rends his garments out of supposed righteous indignation and pronounces Jesus guilty of blasphemy, and says that other witnesses are not necessary to convict him of a capital offense. Without discussion the high-priest puts the vote to the Sanhedrin, and they declare Jesus worthy of death. After this rash, illegal verdict, the court and some of the Sanhedrin mock Jesus with a vileness and vehemence evidencing the depravity of human nature. They buffet him with their hands. They spit in his face. They blindfold him and challenge him to exercise his superhuman knowledge and tell who struck him.

(3) The formal religious trial of Jesus is held after sunrise before Caiaphas, the high-priest, and the Sanhedrin, Mark 15:1; Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:66-71.

All preliminary steps had been taken at the informal early morning meeting of the Sanhedrin which had,

without due process of law, declared Jesus worthy of death. The legal meeting was held after sunrise, yet there was little to be done since the verdict had been rendered at the prior meeting. All that remained for the formal and legal meeting to do was to sanction what had already been agreed upon so hastily, illegally and unjustly—namely, that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and therefore worthy of death. The elders, the chief priests and scribes challenge Jesus to tell who he is, saying, "If thou art the Christ, tell us." He replies, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, but from henceforth (*from now on*) shall the Son of man be seated on the right hand of the power of God." They understand Jesus claims to be the Son of man, and ask a further question, "Art thou, then, the Son of God?" And here, as in the former illegal meeting of the Sanhedrin, he says, "I am." So Jesus, when before the Sanhedrin for the last time, declares definitely and positively that he is the Son of man and the Son of God. No witnesses are therefore called, since the rulers consider the words of his own mouth sufficient to condemn him to death. However, the Jews are unable to execute the death sentence, being a subject nation. Roman authorities alone could inflict capital punishment.

(4) *Peter thrice denies his Lord,* Mark 14:54, 66-72; Matthew 26:58, 69-75; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27.

During the series of trials Peter, according to Christ's prophecy, denies his Lord three times; and all three denials are recorded by the four Gospels. Of course the details are quite different, as might be ex-

pected in those stirring hours. One of the steps downward which Peter took was to follow the Master *afar off*. But finally reaching the gate to the court of the high-priest's residence, he is introduced to the maid, who acts as doorkeeper, by the Apostle John, who was well known at the court. The maid suspects him and says, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" And he says definitely but falsely, "I am not." Then again, on the inside of the court, while warming himself by the enemies' fire, the maid comes to him and says to those standing by, "This man also was with Jesus, the Nazarene." The servants and officers standing around the fire agree with the testimony of the maid. Events move on for an hour, as Luke says, then someone voices the sentiment of the by-standers: "Of a truth this man was with him, for he is a Galilean, for his speech betrayeth him." Straightway the cock crew, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and he remembered the word of the Lord how that he said unto him, "Before the cock crow this day, shalt thou deny me thrice," "and he went out and wept bitterly."

(5) Judas commits suicide, Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19.

In a paroxysm of despair and frenzy of remorse Judas appeals to the chief priests and elders to take back the thirty pieces of silver for which he had betrayed his Lord. It is too late for repentance, but not for remorse. When he said to the rulers, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood," instead of breaking the bargain, they replied with wicked carelessness, "What is that to us? See thou to it." Then,

in the bitterness of inexpressible grief that could find no relief, he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and went away and hanged himself. "Good were it for that man had he never been born." With the thirty pieces of silver a burial ground for strangers was purchased in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

2. The civil trial of Jesus.

At the *first stage* of the civil trial, Christ was brought before Pilate the first time, Mark 15:1-5; Matthew 27:2, 11-14; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38.

The Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death; that was a prerogative of the Romans, the ruling power. They had passed sentence on Jesus but must have that sentence confirmed by the Roman Governor. They came without a definite charge and were embarrassed when Pilate demanded one. But in the multitude of accusations brought against Jesus, three are definitely stated: first, he perverted the nation; second, he forbade to pay tribute to Cæsar; and third, he claimed to be king. After a private interview with Jesus, Pilate made up his mind to release him. This decision was violently opposed, the rulers and the people charged that Jesus created excitement throughout all Judea, beginning at Galilee, unto this place. Upon the mention of *Galilee* Pilate thinks of Herod, the ruler of that province, and decides to turn Jesus over into his hands.

The *second stage* of the civil trial was before Herod, Luke 23:6-12.

Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, had a fiendish delight in seeing Jesus, from whom he expected some spectacu-

lar miracles. Christ treats him with silent disdain. In gorgeous apparel and with vile mocking Jesus is sent back to Pilate. It is worthy of note that Pilate and Herod, who had been enemies, become friends that very day.

The *third stage* of the civil trial was Christ's second and final appearance before Pilate, Mark 15:6-15; Matthew 27:15-26; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39–19:16.

Pilate showed a vacillating spirit. He had already begun to compromise—*first,* by not irrevocably acquitting Jesus at first; *second,* by turning the case over to Herod; *third,* by indecision when Jesus was brought back to him from Herod, and he proposed to release him as a tribute to justice but to scourge him as a measure of compromise to their demands. The *fourth* compromise was when he practically placed Christ's life in the hands of the rulers. Since the Governor was accustomed to release some criminal at each passover, he thought surely they would vote for Jesus; but the rulers were busy among the multitude and soon won over the majority to demand Barabbas instead of Jesus. Pilate says, "What, then, shall I do with Jesus?"—expecting them to say, "Release him also;" but they cry, "Let him be crucified." When Pilate asks, "Why, what evil hath he done?" they have no answer but loud voices—"Away with him! Crucify him! Crucify him!" After Jesus was scourged he was brought before the multitude, and Pilate says, "Behold the man,"—that is, "See him now in this sad plight. Surely there is no harm in him; therefore, release him." But they cry,

"Crucify him!" Lest Pilate release him they say, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Fearing that Jesus might be the Son of God, Pilate has another private interview with him and asks concerning his kingdom which is spiritual. Then Pilate comes forth determined to release him, but the people say, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." The *final compromise* is made. Fearing that he may be reported to Rome and lose his position, he delivers Jesus to their demands, and, washing his hands in the presence of the multitude, says, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." They say, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

III. Jesus is Crucified Between Two Robbers

1. Jesus is mocked by Roman soldiers, Mark 15:16-19; Matthew 27:27-30.

After Christ is condemned to be crucified, he is mocked by Roman soldiers, who clothed him in purple and placed a crown of thorns upon his head and a reed in his right hand and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They even spat upon him and took the reed and smote him upon the head.

2. Jesus bears his cross on the way to Golgotha, Mark 15:20-23; Matthew 27:31-34; Luke 23:26-33; John 19:16, 17.

On the way to Calvary Jesus first bears his own cross, according to the oriental custom. It seems, however, that he became exhausted under the burden, which was the occasion of pressing Simon, of Cyrene,

into the service of bearing the cross the rest of the way to the scene of crucifixion.

On the road women lament Christ's impending death, and to them he says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." They are to sorrow more over the doom of sin than over the fact of his crucifixion.

3. A view of Jesus during the first three hours on the cross, Mark 15:24-32; Matthew 27:35-44; Luke 23:33-43; John 19:18-27.

At the foot of the cross the soldiers divide the four garments of Jesus and cast lots for the seamless robe. The inscription indicating the crime for which Jesus was crucified was written in Greek—the language of culture; Latin—the language of law; and Hebrew—the language of religion. The inscriptions vary in their wording, but there is one common expression: "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

We find three attitudes of mind: first, that of hatred or antipathy cherished by the rulers; second, indifference or apathy, illustrated by the soldiers; third, love or sympathy, illustrated by the Apostle John and the mother of Jesus.

During these hours three of the seven sentences uttered by Jesus while on the cross were spoken. First, the prayer of intercession—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Second, the promise of pardon spoken to the penitent robber—"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Third, the charge of affection to John and his mother—"Woman, behold thy son," and "Son, behold thy mother."

The rulers, chief priests and soldiers, the multitudes, and the robbers crucified with Jesus, mocked him with scornful hate. He is even challenged to save himself if he be the Son of God. But verily had he saved himself he could not have saved lost sinners.

4. Jesus, during the three hours of darkness from noon till three o'clock, Mark 15:33-37; Matthew 27:45-50; Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-30.

During this awful period, so significant for heaven and earth, Jesus uttered the last four sayings spoken while on the cross. The first three referred to others; the last four to himself. The cry of desolation: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The cry of physical suffering: "I thirst!" The shout of victory: "It is finished!" The prayer of resignation: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

5. Christ's death is accompanied by striking events, Mark 15:38-41; Matthew 27:51-56; Luke 23:45, 47-49.

The veil of the temple is rent from top to bottom, and the tombs are opened and many bodies of the saints are raised. The centurion that watched Jesus unto the end exclaimed: "Truly this was the Son of God;" and the women that had supported Jesus in Galilee, and those who had come with him to Jerusalem, stood afar off beholding all of these things with burdened hearts.

6. The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Mark 15:42-46; Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 23:50-54; John 19:31-42.

Jesus had a decent burial. A rich man, Joseph of

Arimathea, an honourable member of the Sanhedrin—a good and righteous man—asked for the privilege of burying the body of Jesus in his own new tomb. After absolute proof of the fact that Jesus is dead, Joseph's request is granted. Nicodemus co-operates with him in furnishing an abundant supply of material for embalming. The body thus prepared is laid to rest in a tomb wherein never man lay, and a great stone rolled to the door to protect it from intrusion.

7. The body of Jesus is watched by women and guarded by Roman soldiers, Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:61-66; Luke 23:55, 56.

The Pharisees, fearing that Jesus might rise on the third day, reported their anxiety to Pilate, who tells them to make the sepulchre as secure as they know how. So they use the Roman seal and the Roman guard and venture to hope that the dead Saviour will remain dead evermore.

CHAPTER IX

THE PERIOD OF EXALTATION—JESUS GAINING THE VICTORY OVER DEATH

I. The Women Visit the Tomb of Jesus

II. The Stone is Supernaturally Rolled Away from the Door of the Tomb

III. The Faithful Women Visit the Tomb of Jesus Early Sunday Morning

IV. The Women Report to the Apostles the Fact of Christ's Resurrection

V. Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene and Comforts Her in Her Sorrow
   1. The disciples need multiplied evidence of Jesus' resurrection
   2. Mary Magdalene visits the tomb and is met by angels
   3. Jesus meets Mary and is recognized

VI. Jesus Appears to Other Women Than Mary Magdalene the Day of His Resurrection

VII. Some of the Guard Report the Resurrection of Christ to the Jewish Rulers
   1. The guards report the resurrection of Jesus
   2. The Sanhedrin bribes and instructs the guards
   3. The Satanic efforts to thwart the plan of God

VIII. Jesus Appears to Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus

IX. The Two Disciples Report that Jesus Appeared to Them and to Peter

X. Jesus Appears to the Disciples and Gives Them a Commission
   1. Jesus appears to the disciples gathered behind closed doors
   2. Jesus demonstrates the reality of his bodily resurrection
   3. Jesus commissions them
   4. The absent Thomas expressed his doubt of Jesus' resurrection

XI. Jesus Appears to His Disciples Again a Week from the Day of His Resurrection
1. Jesus again appears to his disciples gathered behind closed doors
2. Thomas is convinced of the reality of Jesus' bodily resurrection
3. The purpose of John's Gospel

XII. Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples Beside the Sea of Galilee
1. Seven disciples go fishing on the Sea of Galilee
2. After a night of fruitless labour the disciples make a great catch at the command of Jesus, who greets them in the morning from the shore
3. Jesus elicits from Peter an expression of his loving devotion
4. Jesus rebukes Peter for his curiosity about John's career
5. The fragmentary nature of the Gospel records

XIII. Jesus Gives a Commission to Above Five Hundred on an Appointed Mountain in Galilee
1. The scene of the Great Commission in Galilee
2. The form of the Commission in Mark and Matthew
3. The power, program and promise in the Commission

XIV. Jesus Appears to James and to All the Apostles

XV. Jesus Appears Again to the Disciples and Gives Another Commission

XVI. Jesus Bids Farewell to His Disciples on Mount Olivet

CHAPTER IX

THE PERIOD OF EXALTATION—CHRIST GAINING THE VICTORY OVER DEATH

THE HOPE of the disciples was buried in the tomb of Christ, but when he arose from the dead, their spirit revived. It was indeed difficult to convince them of the glorious fact of Christ's bodily resurrection; therefore, the evidences that proved to them that he conquered death are historically irrefutable and altogether convincing to candid minds.

1. The women visit the tomb of Jesus, Mark 16:1; Matthew 28:1.

Some women are faithful watchers at the tomb on the Sabbath, or on Saturday afternoon, and after six o'clock—the close of the Jewish Sabbath—they purchase spices and come to anoint the body of Jesus. Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, Joanna, and Salome, constitute the memorable group of loving watchers and visitors. Seemingly they were not aware of the fact that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had given the body of Jesus an honourable Jewish burial by embalming it and placing it in Joseph's own new tomb.

2. The stone is supernaturally rolled away from the door of the tomb, Matthew 28:2-4.

When Christ arose the majesty of God was manifested in a great earthquake that did not accidentally

happen, but took place at the divinely appointed hour. Furthermore, an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the heavy stone that had been placed before the door of the tomb and sat upon it in quiet dignity and self-possession. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment as white as snow. We wonder not, therefore, that the Roman watchers—brave men though they were—feared exceedingly, and in the consciousness of supernatural manifestation, became as dead men.

3. The faithful women visit the tomb of Jesus early Sunday morning, Mark 16:2-8; Matthew 28:5-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1.

Some of the women who were true to Christ in life and in death visit his tomb early Sunday morning and are cheered by the message of the angel announcing the good news of his resurrection. As they draw near to the tomb, they call to mind the great stone that had been rolled before the door of the sepulchre. Bringing spices with which they hope to anoint the body of Jesus, they naturally think of the difficulty of their task on account of the stone that would prevent them from performing this act of loving devotion. They, therefore, say among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?" Thus they borrow, for only a few moments, however, unnecessary trouble. Looking up they see that the stone is rolled back; for it is exceedingly great—too great for women's hands; hence an angel had been dispatched to perform the needed task.

Without difficulty they enter the tomb and are per-

plexed because they find not the body of Jesus. But two men or angels stand by them in dazzling apparel, and in reverential awe they bow themselves to the earth in holy amazement. One of the angels sits on the right side of the tomb, arrayed in a white robe, and speaks the cheering words: "Be not amazed; ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him! But, go tell his disciples *and Peter,* he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him as he said unto you." Matthew gives the words of the angel in these significant terms: "Fear ye not, for I know that ye seek Jesus which hath been crucified. He is not here; he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay and go quickly and tell his disciples, he is risen from the dead. Lo, he goeth before you into Galilee! There shall ye see him—lo, I have told you!" Or, as Luke states it in his own graphic way: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise again." These glorious words seem too good to be true, and for the time being the women are dumb through fear as they run to bring his disciples word.

"Come" and "see," "go" and "tell," are four significant words giving an epitome of the angel's commission. The women are to bear the message to the disciples who are sorrowing in despair; and especially to Peter, who might feel that he had sinned beyond

restoration. Thus faithfully and tenderly does the Lord deal with his own in times of direst need.

4. The women report to the apostles the fact of Christ's resurrection, Luke 24:9-12; John 12:2-10.

In obedience to the angel's command, Mary Magdalene and the other women report to the apostles the fact of Christ's resurrection, but " these words appear in their sight as idle talk, and they disbelieve them." Evidently hope had departed from the hearts of the disciples during the dark hours our Saviour lay in the tomb.

Peter and John, hearing from Mary Magdalene—spokesman for the women—the news of Christ's resurrection, rush to the tomb to verify by personal experience the truth of what they had heard. Through superior fleetness of foot, John arrives at the tomb in advance of Peter, but halts at the entrance until the arrival of his companion, who rushes quickly into the sepulchre ahead of the beloved disciple. " Then went in also that other disciple," following in the steps of Peter. They see the linen clothes with which the Saviour was wrapped, and the napkin that was about his head—not lying with the linen clothes, but rolled up in a place by itself. They see not the body of Jesus, for it had been removed by power divine. Everything in the tomb bears evidence, not of violent robbery, but of the quiet, miraculous departure of Jesus from the chamber of death.

5. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and comforts her in her sorrow, Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18.

The women, as well as the disciples, believed that the

death of Jesus ended all. They failed to grasp the fact of a literal resurrection. They perhaps thought that Jesus in some mysterious way would *die to obscurity* and *rise to the Jewish throne,* and with the sword break the sovereignty of Rome and establish the kingdom of heaven, restore the empire of Solomon, and reign in splendour from Jerusalem unto the ends of the earth. Neither the women nor the disciples anticipated the bodily resurrection of Jesus; hence, the multiplied evidence necessary to convince them of this stupendous historic fact.

The first appearance of Jesus, after his resurrection, was to Mary Magdalene on the very day he conquered death. Not finding the body of Jesus in the tomb, and not understanding the comfort to be found in the fact of the resurrection, very naturally Mary stood outside the tomb weeping with a broken heart. But looking wistfully again into the sepulchre she beholds two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. These tender messengers from heaven ask her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She saith unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they laid him." In her grief and blinding tears she does not grasp the fact of a divine resurrection; she simply does not find the body of Jesus and sobs aloud with inconsolable grief.

The first recorded words spoken by Christ after he arose from the dead are the twofold question to Mary Magdalene: "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Unable to see through her falling

tears, and supposing the voice to be that of the gardener, she asks him to tell her where to find the body of Jesus that she may guard it with tender care. Then Jesus, with a divine accent she had heard before his death, addresses her: "Mary!" and she instantly responds: "Rabboni (Master)!" and in a holy passion starts to take hold of him, doubtless falling prostrate at his feet. But he says to her: "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, but go unto my brethren and say to them I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." Jesus was not to be detained in his onward march to the heavenly Father; nor was the passionate devotion manifested toward him as important as the mission upon which she is to enter in bearing the message of the risen Lord to the sorrowing disciples.

6. Jesus appears to other women than Mary Magdalene on the day of his resurrection, Matthew 28:9-10.

Passing on from Mary and the open tomb, Jesus meets other women and exclaims, "All hail!" There is something in his voice that convinces them of his identity, so they come and take hold of his feet and worship him in sincerity. But brief is this period of passionate prostration, for Jesus quiets their fears and gives them a mission, saying, "Fear not. Go, tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me." The first evangels of the risen Christ are the faithful women who bear the good news to the scattered disciples and brethren, or spiritual kindred, of our Lord.

7. Some of the guard report the resurrection of Christ to the Jewish rulers, Matthew 28:11-15.

While the women, with trembling joy, were carrying the message of Christ's resurrection to the disciples, some of the guard, fearing death from the charge of unfaithful watching, made their report to the chief priests. It would be interesting to know just what is included in "all the things that were come to pass" which the dispersed Roman guard told the Jewish rulers.

A hurried meeting of the Sanhedrin was held, and the elders took counsel against the spread of the news reported by the Roman guard. In a vain effort to thwart the dissemination of the good news of the literal resurrection of Christ, and to substitute in its place the false report that the disciples came by night and stole him away while the soldiers slept, a handsome bribe was offered to the soldiers to give their testimony according to the diabolical proposition of the Sanhedrin. To guarantee the success of their Satanic scheme, they gave assurance to the soldiers that in the event Pilate, the Governor, should hear of the plan to pervert the report of the resurrection, they would willingly take upon themselves the responsibility of quieting the conscience of Pilate on the question of justice, and of protecting them from any penal consequences. Being averse neither to a generous bribe, nor to the guarantee of their own safety, the soldiers "took the money and did as they were taught."

Thus, the strongest evidence we have against the literal resurrection of Jesus is that of bribe-taking,

false-swearing, sleeping soldiers who confess a failure to keep watchful guard over the tomb of Jesus. Satan did his utmost to *prevent the fact* of the resurrection of Jesus, to *pervert the record* of the resurrection and to *prohibit the proclamation* of the resurrection, for by his resurrection Jesus is declared to be the Son of God with power.

8. Jesus appears to two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-32.

On the day of his resurrection Jesus appeared to two disciples, Cleopas and another one whose name is unknown, as they went on their sorrowful way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a village seven or eight miles from Jerusalem.

With sadness of heart these two disciples talk of the recent happenings in the Jewish capital, seeking if possible to find some ray of light in the labyrinth of darkness. At the right time on the journey Jesus draws near and joins them, introducing the conversation thus: "What communications are these that ye have one with another as ye walk?" Instantly they halt to answer his question. With a cloud of sadness settling on their faces they express wonder that he is seemingly ignorant of the only question that could possibly be in mind and on tongue during the recent days of awful sorrow and tragedy. To elicit the full expression of what is in their hearts, Jesus asks: "What things have taken place creating such a profound and widespread sorrow?" They tell him that Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, has—by the chief priests

and rulers—been condemned to death and crucified. Then with the inexpressible pathos of despair they say, "We had hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel." But even in the midst of this darkness there is a thread of light, for they say, "Certain women of our company visited the tomb early this morning and failed to find the body of Jesus, and instead they saw two angels who said that Jesus was alive. And in addition to the angelic testimony certain disciples, Peter and John, report an empty tomb." The two disciples are evidently in a state of great perplexity, and Jesus explains to them, from Moses and from all the prophets, the things pertaining to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

Coming to the journey's end, Jesus was induced to enter the house and take with them the evening meal. As they sat at meat he took the bread and blessed it and brake and gave it to them, thus reminding us of what he did on more than one occasion during his earthly ministry. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus, who immediately vanished out of sight; and they said one to another, "Was not our heart burning within us as he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

9. The two disciples report that Jesus appeared to them and to Peter, Luke 24:33-35; I Corinthians 15:5.

After Jesus left the two disciples at Emmaus, they returned immediately to Jerusalem and found the eleven disciples, and others associated with them, gathered together. Their own hearts have been cheered,

and they quickly bear the message of hope to kindred spirits. They say to the assembled group, " The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." They have no doubt now about the real resurrection of Jesus, who is " risen indeed," and will have evermore a faithful witness in Simon Peter. They rehearse to the assembled friends of Jesus what had happened at Emmaus and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

10. Jesus appears to the disciples and gives them a commission, Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25.

Just as the two disciples from Emmaus finish their report to the group of believers gathered behind closed doors, Jesus suddenly and mysteriously appears and, standing in their midst says unto them, " Peace be unto you! " At these words they are terrified and affrighted, supposing that they behold a spirit instead of their risen Lord. Evidently they are not predisposed to accept the fact of his resurrection. Jesus finds it necessary to upbraid them, with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believe not the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen from the dead.

In order to remove all doubt as to his identity, Jesus shows them his hands, his feet and his side, and reminds them of the fact that " a spirit hath not flesh and bones " which he evidently has even now. After this revelation they still disbelieve for joy, thinking that the news of his resurrection is too good to be true. Then Jesus gives them further evidence of his personal

identity. "Have ye here anything to eat?" asks he; and they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and did eat before them. "The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord."

In the joy of faith, nourished by facts, the disciples hear the first commission of our Lord: "Peace be unto you! As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The disciples are thus divinely sent on their mission and have supreme authority to proclaim according to God's will the condition of the forgiveness of sin. In carrying on this work, they are to have the inbreathing of the divine Spirit to empower them for service.

Thomas is absent on this occasion. The other disciples, therefore, report to him the central fact in the proceedings of the gathering, saying, "We have seen the Lord." He is not prepared in mind or heart to accept at face value these glorious words and says doubtfully, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." He does not dismiss the fact of Christ's resurrection as an absolute impossibility, but lays down conditions on which alone he will accept the truth of the disciples' testimony.

11. Jesus appears to his disciples again a week from the day of his resurrection, John 20:26-31; I Corinthians 15:5.

A week after the resurrection the disciples gather

together, according to what seems to be their custom. The Sunday preceding Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them, unmistakably revealing his identity. On this second Sunday they assemble again behind closed doors, and Jesus—as on the former occasion—suddenly appears with this greeting: " Peace be unto you! " Thomas is present, doubtless regretting that he was absent a week before. He is in search of evidence to remove, if possible, his doubt concerning the resurrection of Jesus. His doubts, being honest, are short-lived.

Jesus knows by divine intuition the test that Thomas had laid down to prove the fact of his resurrection. He, therefore, says to him: " Reach hither thy finger and feel my hands, and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side, and be not faithless but believing." Thomas, being brought face to face with Jesus, suddenly drops his proposed test, so materialistic and rationalistic. His personal vision of Jesus removes all doubts, and he exclaims, in the majesty and simplicity of a conquering faith, " My Lord and my God! " Jesus says unto him, " Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed " (or, shall believe the testimony of others now and in the coming years).

We have in John 20:30-31 a very meaningful expression: " Many other signs, therefore, did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." John's purpose

in writing his Gospel was noble, definite and vital. He made a selection of the signs or miracles that Jesus performed, and of the words that Jesus uttered, and so grouped them that every earnest seeker may have a rational ground for personal faith in Jesus as the Son of God and the giver of life to all who believe in his name.

12. Jesus appears to seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee, John 21.

Jesus had promised to meet his disciples on an appointed mountain in Galilee. This may account in part for the return to their old home where they thought it best to abide until further definite instructions from Jesus. Meanwhile it seems that some of them are following their former vocation of fishing, either as a matter of recreation or business. Peter tells some of his associates that he is going a fishing, and they volunteer to go with him—seven in all, two of them unknown by name, but the names of the other five are either given or may be inferred—namely, Simon Peter, Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee (James and John).

They spend the night fishing, but absolute failure is all they have to report in the early morning. Jesus stands on the shore at break of day, and in a friendly way says, " Children, have yet aught to eat? "—a delicate way of asking them if they had caught anything. Their reply is one significant word: " No." He then gives simple directions coupled with a promise: " Cast the net on the right side of the boat and ye shall find." They instantly follow his instruction and, to their joy-

ful surprise, they enclose in their net one hundred and fifty-three large fish. John, with the intuition of love, cries out, " It is the Lord! " And Peter, with his characteristic promptness, girds his coat about him and leaps into the sea, leaving the other disciples to bring the boat and fish to land. Upon reaching the shore they find that Jesus had prepared a fire of charcoal and a fish and a loaf for a meagre breakfast. This is supplemented by the fish that had just been caught, and Jesus and his disciples enjoy an ample breakfast by the seaside.

This incident reminds us of the first call of the disciples to service, and may be considered their second call to apostolic duty. On this memorable occasion Jesus tests Peter especially and gives him assurance of restoration to divine favour, and a commission for loving service. Jesus elicits Peter's love for him with piercing questions. First he asks: " Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? " Peter recalls his former boast of superior devotion and doubtless recognizes that the word Jesus uses for *love* indicates a high spiritual affection, and replies: " Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He does not use the same word for love that Jesus employs, but a term indicating friendship rather than spiritual devotion. He virtually says, " Thou knowest that I am a friend to thee." Christ says, " Feed my lambs." The second time Christ asks: " Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? "—leaving out the comparative phrase " more than these," but using the strong word for love that he had employed before. Peter replies: " Yea, Lord, thou

knowest that I am a friend to thee,"—using still the weaker word for affection—and Christ says: "Tend my sheep." Jesus asks him the third time: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" Christ now adopts Peter's word for affection. Peter is naturally grieved at the threefold repetition of the question, as it reminds him of his threefold denial, so he says to Jesus with genuine emphasis: "Lord, thou knowest *all things;* thou knowest that I am a friend to thee." Jesus says unto him: "Feed my sheep." Thus Christ makes love for him the supreme motive and test for service. He desires only those as undershepherds who are actuated by the purest devotion to him as Saviour and Lord and unselfish love for the lambs and sheep in the divine fold.

Jesus forecasts Peter's ministry and martyrdom, contrasting the vigour of youth and the helplessness of age, and then says to him pointedly, "Follow me." Peter's attention is diverted to John, who is following closely in their steps, and asks Jesus: "Lord, what shall this man do? Tell me about his future," thus manifesting a spirit of curiosity. Jesus says to him: "That is of no concern to you. I have a plan for your life; I have a plan for his life. Leave it all in my hands. If it be my will for him to remain until I return to earth, what is that to thee?" Thus Jesus would emphasize the importance of personal surrender and obedience to his will, and the execution of God's plan for the individual life.

In John 21:25 we have a striking statement: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the

which if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." John's Gospel, therefore, gives only a few of the myriad things that Jesus said and did. In fact, the fourfold Gospel record is but a brief epitome of the earthly life of our Lord.

13. Jesus gives a commission to above five hundred on an appointed mountain in Galilee, Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:16-20; I Corinthians 15:6.

Christ's purpose to meet the disciples in Galilee after his resurrection had been announced by him before his death, by the angels to the women just after his resurrection, by Jesus himself to the group of faithful women, and by the women to the disciples.

Galilee was the scene of Christ's most extensive activities, and all of the disciples except Judas Iscariot were Galileans; and by far the largest proportion of his followers were gathered in Galilee. Very naturally, therefore, he would appear to his disciples at an appointed time and place somewhere in Galilee. Perhaps he selected the very mountain on which he delivered his inaugural address, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), as the place where his faithful disciples and above five hundred brethren (referred to in I Cor. 15:6) should gather together and hear what is practically a farewell discourse or commission. When they saw Jesus "they worshipped him, but some doubted" (Matthew 28:17),—perhaps some of the five hundred, for the doubts of the eleven had already been dissolved.

The form of the commission, as given in Mark

16:15, 16, is *legal,* implying the condemnation of the rejecter of the Gospel and the glorious news of liberty to those who believe it, and as a result of their justifying faith are baptized. " Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

Matthew's form of the commission is *educational,* implying ignorance on the part of sinners and instruction in the way of salvation and service on the part of the disciples of Christ. " All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Three things are distinctly emphasized in this commission.

First, *the power* or authority. All authority in heaven and on earth is back of the disciples who are engaged in missionary work.

Second, *the program.* There are several characteristics of the missionary program as given by Christ. Christ's program is *progressive:* " Go " or " As ye go " or " Going,"—implying, of course, that the disciples must go and will go according to the divine plan and command. Christ's program is *evangelistic* or *redemptive.* Disciple or make disciples to Christ out of those who know him not, irrespective of kindred and people and tribe and tongue. Christ's program is *ceremonial* or *symbolic.* Let the redeemed disciple sym-

bolize his experience and manifest his obedience to Christ by being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Christ's program is *educational.* The baptized disciples are to be taught all things Christ enjoined—a limited and yet sufficiently comprehensive religious curriculum. Christ's purpose is to have a well-informed discipleship, especially in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Christ's program is *practical.* The baptized disciples are to be taught, not simply in order that they may *know* but in order that they may *observe* all things Christ commanded; things great and small, difficult and easy, important and unimportant, as man grades values. There is a long process of Christian development and service to follow the personal and saving experience with Jesus Christ, the hour one first believes.

Third, *the promise.* Christ makes an inspiring statement which is a virtual promise to those who are engaged in carrying out his missionary program: "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." How impressive are the four "alls" in the memorable words of our Lord as recorded in this commission by Matthew—"all authority," "all nations," all things" and "all the days."

The magnitude and glory of our task should challenge us to do our best as individuals who love the Lord and as churches which are divinely organized agencies for carrying forward the missionary enterprise of Jesus Christ unto the uttermost parts of the earth and until the consummation of the age.

14. Jesus appears to James and to all the apostles, I Corinthians 15:7.

When or how Jesus appeared to James, his half-brother, we are not informed, but doubtless the event had a memorable and transforming effect upon him who did not believe for a season but became a member of the prayer-group between the Ascension and Pentecost and subsequently pastor of the church at Jerusalem and author of the Epistle of James.

15. Jesus appears again to the disciples, giving another commission, Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8.

The forty days intervening between the resurrection of Christ and his ascension were characterized by many special appearances of Jesus to his disciples and by instruction given to them in all matters pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Though the disciples had been with Christ for three years, and had heard his explanations concerning the Messianic element in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the Psalms, they still need to have their minds opened that they may understand the scriptures. Jesus says unto them: "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things, and behold I send forth a promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high."

The sad note of repentance, the glad news of the forgiveness of sins, the redemptive message of a sacri-

ficial and triumphant Christ, are to be the heart of the missionary's message everywhere and at all times. The value of a witness depends upon what he knows, what he is, and what he says.

As a further equipment for service, Jesus gives assurance that the Holy Spirit, sent in fulfilment of the divine promise, shall clothe them with power from on high, that they may go forth, not in the weakness of the flesh, but in the power and demonstration of the Spirit.

During this period Jesus gives instruction to the twelve and shows himself alive by many reliable proofs, revealing himself to individuals, groups—large and small—and in varied circumstances, that they might have no doubt as to his identity and authority. They freely ask Jesus if the time has arrived for the kingdom of Israel to be restored in opposition to the Roman government, thus showing that the materialistic idea of the kingdom of heaven is still prominent in their minds. Christ does not answer this speculative question but does something far better; he points out to them a mighty mission, namely, witness-bearing throughout the world. Instead of giving them knowledge concerning times and seasons and divine dispensations, which the Father hath set within his own authority, Jesus says to them: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." They are to go onward and outward into ever-enlarging concentric circles—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the wide,

wide world, until all the nations shall hear their testimony of the crucified, risen, returning and reigning Lord.

16. Jesus bids farewell to his disciples on Mount Olivet, Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12.

The hour having arrived for Christ to go back to the Father, he gently leads his disciples to Mount Olivet, between Jerusalem and Bethany, a mountain crowned with many a precious memory. With hands uplifted, he bestows upon them a parting blessing. What he said has not been preserved, but his words must have lingered in memory as an abiding joy to all who heard him. The benediction being pronounced, Jesus steps into a chariot of cloud and is carried up into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God, henceforth expecting until his enemies be made his footstool.

As he gradually ascends toward heaven, the disciples naturally gaze upon him with tenacious love. Instantly they behold two men standing by them in white apparel and hear from their authoritative lips the pointed question and the cheering promise: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven (as if ye shall never see your Lord again)? This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God for his wonderful goodness to the children of men. And in due time, being prepared by the Holy Spirit for their

heavenly mission, "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen."

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